HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN AT 20

TOTAL FILM

THE BIKERIDERS
AUSTIN BUTLER & JODIE COMER REV UP

INSIDE OUT 2
EMOTIONAL ACCESS AT PIXAR HQ

EXCLUSIVE!

TWISTERS

HOLY COW! PREPARE TO BE BLOWN AWAY BY THE INTENSE NEW SPIN ON THE ULTIMATE 90s DISASTER MOVIE

+ MORE HUGE SUMMER MOVIES!

ALIEN: ROMULUS BAD BOYS 4 MAXXXINE BEVERLY HILLS COP: AXEL F DESPICABLE ME 4

PLUS VICKY KRIEPS DJIMON HOUNSOU THE WATCHED LILY GLADSTONE THE FUTURE OF IMAX GREMLINS REVISITED!

FUTURE

FROM THE PRODUCERS OF **HEREDITARY** AND **MIDSOMMAR**

"A MASTERPIECE"
★★★★★
IGN MOVIES

"INGENIOUS... A BRILLIANT AND RADICAL COMEDY"
★★★★
THE GUARDIAN

"A UNICORN OF A MOVIE. MUST BE SEEN TO BE BELIEVED"
VARIETY

"HILARIOUS AND DEMENTEDLY POIGNANT"
INDIEWIRE

★★★★ TOTAL FILM

★★★★ FILM THREAT

★★★★ EYE FOR FILM

ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE

RILEY KEOUGH

JESSE EISENBERG

SASQUATCH SUNSET

OFFICIAL SELECTION 2024 sundance film festival

74 Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin Berlinale Special

IN CINEMAS 14 JUNE

BOOK NOW AT **SASQUATCHSUNSETFILM.CO.UK**

Welcome to

TOTAL FILM

THE SMARTER MOVIE MAGAZINE

T*wister* was a pivotal big-screen experience for me growing up. It was one of the first films – maybe even *the* first – that I saw at the cinema with friends but no parents present. The VFX might creak a little now, but it still retains that ineffable 'if I see it on ITV4 while channel-hopping there's no way I can switch it off' vibe. It has momentum, palpable peril, and a cast of immensely likeable character actors playing everyday heroes. Yes, the plot amounts to little more than tornadoes of ever-increasing sizes, but there's wit and a rekindling romance along for the ride.

We'll find out soon if *Twisters*, a sort of sequel (we're in the same world, but following a totally new set of characters in the present day), will recapture the magic with cutting-edge VFX and an eclectic young cast. After speaking to director Lee Isaac Chung and stars Glen Powell, Daisy Edgar-Jones and Anthony Ramos, I'm very hyped for another round of edge-of-seat immersion, with all that the big screen and a full surround-sound system can throw at me. I hope you'll feel the same, too. Hell, I might even go 4DX.

But that's just one summer movie to get excited about that we're covering this issue. Things got emotional when I visited Pixar HQ for our *Inside Out* 2 feature; Austin Butler and Jodie Comer are epitomising old-school cool in *The Bikeriders*; and Alfonso Cuarón and David Heyman are reflecting on *The Prisoner of Azkaban* at 20 (the *best* Potter movie?). Plus, new looks at *Alien: Romulus*, *Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F*, *Bad Boys: Ride or Die* and *MaXXXine*. Will any of these films prove to be un-turn-off-able on ITV4 in 30 years' time? We'll see. But it looks like we're in for a hell of a fun summer…

Enjoy the issue!

Matt

MATT MAYTUM, EDITOR
@MATTMAYTUM

CALL SHEET
THIS ISSUE'S EXTRAS

NEWS EDITOR
LAUREN MILES
@LAUREN_M1LES

Andy Serkis turning up to the *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes* launch event to conduct a Q&A with the cast was thrilling, but the whole room singing *Happy Birthday* to him was even more unforgettable.

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
JAMES MOTTRAM
@JAMESMOTTRAM

It was a true privilege to speak to Vicky Krieps for her new film *The Dead Don't Hurt*. So rare to get an actor so outspoken, so unguarded and so funny. What a star!

CONTRIBUTOR
SIMON BLAND
@SITWEETSTOO

I had an ace time picking *Gremlins* director Joe Dante and producer Michael Finnell's brains about ignoring the rules, putting up with puppets and creating an 80s gem. Gizmo wouldn't approve!

ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT WRITER
MOLLY EDWARDS
@MOLLYCAROLINE7

Had a blast chatting about *The Fall Guy* with Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt for the *Inside Total Film* podcast – and the premiere at the BFI IMAX even featured some unexpected stunts...

EDITOR-AT-LARGE
JAMIE GRAHAM
@JAMIE_GRAHAM9

My local ran a Spielberg season so I saw *Jaws*, *Close Encounters* and *E.T.* on the big screen this month. First time I'd seen *Close Encounters* supersized. A religious experience.

ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT WRITER
EMILY MURRAY
@EMILYVMURRAY

Interviewing the *Kingdom... of the Apes* cast for the website was the most chaotic yet fun junket I've had in a while – a surprising amount of chat about toes and Elon Musk (but thankfully not Elon Musk's toes).

Contents

#351 JUNE 2024

THIS ISSUE

32 TWISTERS
Man of the moment Glen Powell, Daisy Edgar-Jones and Anthony Ramos play the next generation of storm-troopers in the sequel going hell for weather. For the win(d)!

44 INSIDE OUT 2
En-Joy this report direct from Pixar HQ where we rummage through the minds of the ani-masters.

50 THE BIKERIDERS
Butler and Comer, in convo. Sadly, not conducted on the back of a speeding hog.

56 THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN AT 20
Celebrating two decades of the best Potter with director Alfonso Cuarón. Take that, *Goblet* fans.

62 IMAX
Go big or go home. We investigate the king of supersized screens and ask: is the future of event cinema upon us?

EVERY ISSUE

3 EDITOR'S LETTER
Plus the gang's latest glitterati meet 'n' greets.

66 TOTAL FILM INTERVIEW
Vicky Krieps talks new movie *The Dead Don't Hurt* plus a few of her *Old* ones.

112 DIALOGUE
This month's mailbag: 350th-issue celebrations, stealth Vader posters, and *M3GAN* v *Babylon*.

TEASERS

7 BEVERLY HILLS COP: AXEL F
Eddie Murphy is back on the beat. Top banana!

12 ALIEN: ROMULUS
It's 'morphin time. Good, we're jonesing for more.

16 BAD BOYS: RIDE OR DIE
Bet they regret using 'for life' on the third film.

18 THE WATCHED
Ishana Night Shyamalan follows in her dad's footsteps – didn't see that coming.

22 MAXXXINE
Ti West's horror trilogy climaxes with a porn-world slasher.

28 DESPICABLE ME 4
It's all about Gru/it's all about Gru's baby!

30 FANCY DANCE
Lily Gladstone steps up.

31 DJIMON HOUNSOU
The stalwart star speaks – very quietly – about *A Quiet Place: Day One*.

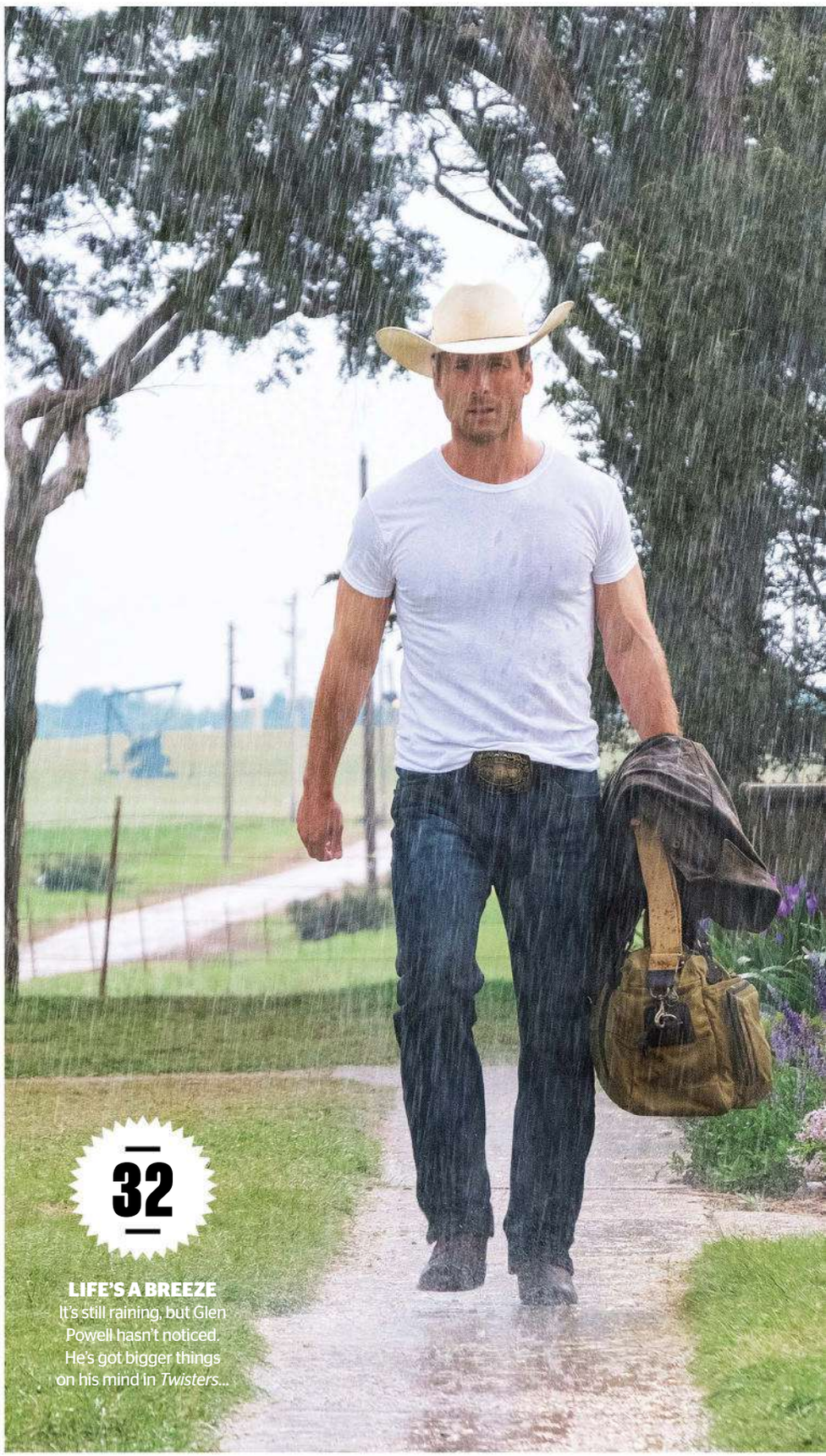
TOTAL FILM BUFF

97 10 OF THE BEST
Plaster casts! We've gone out on a limb here.

98 FLOP CULTURE
Why did *Annihilation* have the Shimmer but not the box-office shine?

100 GREMLINS
A 40th-birthday celebration with Joe Dante. Just don't read it after midnight…

108 GOLDEN GRAHAMS
Our Jamie braves a deadly duo of cult Italian horrors.

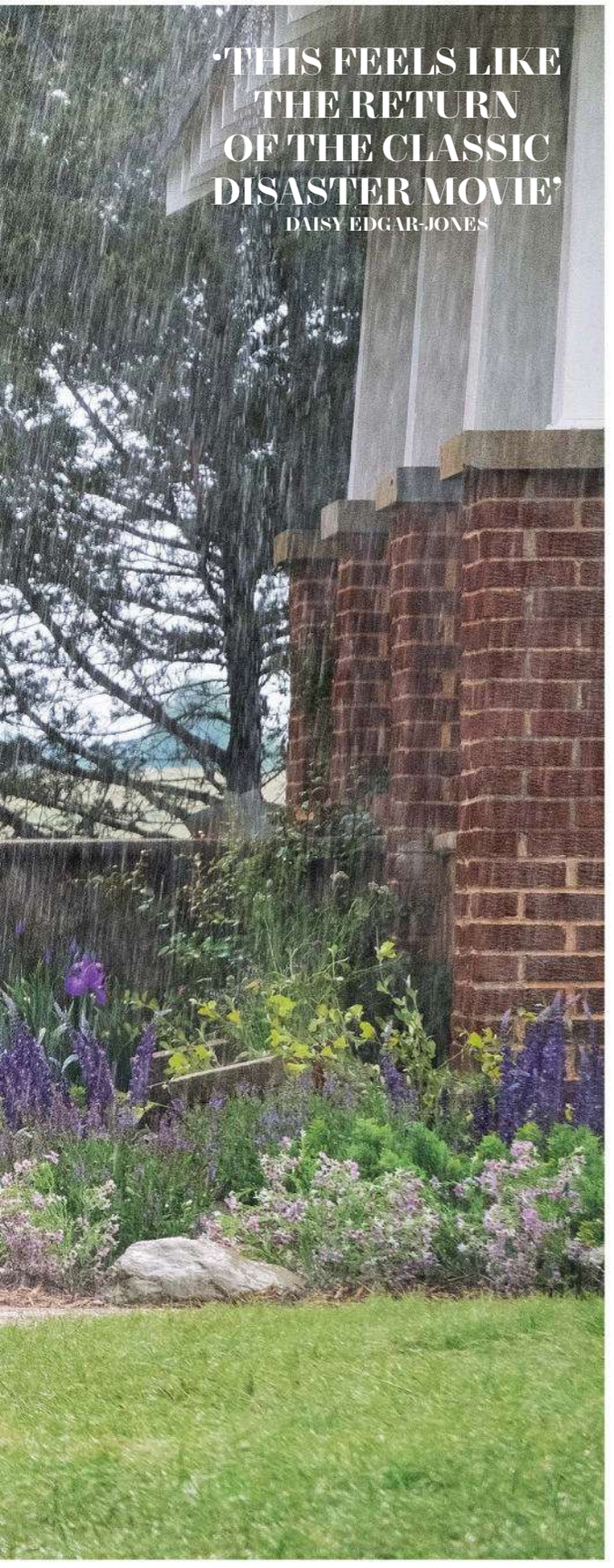


32

LIFE'S A BREEZE
It's still raining, but Glen Powell hasn't noticed. He's got bigger things on his mind in *Twisters*...

SCAN TO GET OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS



'THIS FEELS LIKE THE RETURN OF THE CLASSIC DISASTER MOVIE'

DAISY EDGAR-JONES

SCREEN

76 HIT MAN
Is it a high mark for Glen Powell pretending to be a top hired gun?

78 STING
Don't stand/don't stand so/don't stand so close to a giant alien spid-eek!!

78 SASQUATCH SUNSET
As all good Bigfoot movies should, this dark comedy leaves a large impression.

80 THE DEAD DON'T HURT
Viggo directs and stars in a western. *For a Few Dollars Mortensen*, if you will.

81 THE BEAST
Seydoux starrer set across multiple time periods. It's a proper Léa cake.

82 WILLIAM SHATNER: YOU CAN CALL ME BILL
A doc you KHAAAAN'T!! afford to miss.

84 KINGDOM OF THE PLANET OF THE APES
A furry tale for the ages, or just chimp entertainment?

85 POOLMAN
Chris Pine proves that not all woods float on water…

86 ENTER THE CLONES OF BRUCE
Doc exploring why everybody was kung-fu fighting after Lee's death.

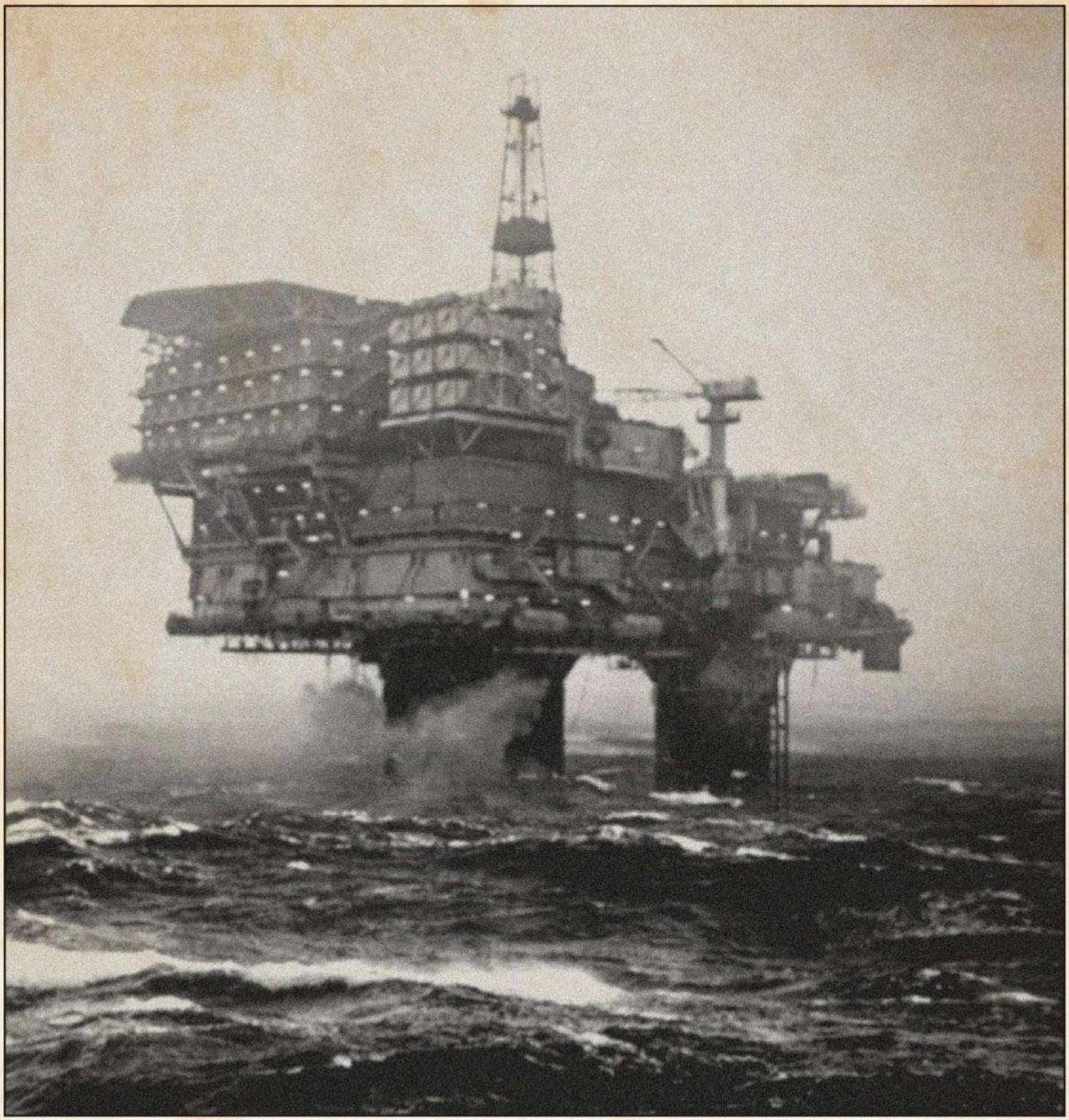
87 RERELEASES
From *The Matrix* to *Texas Chain Saw*, there's some heavy leather incoming.

90 CLASSIC TV
A slice of local history…

92 SOUNDTRACKS
Eternal-ly great tunes.

94 BOOKS
Michael Mann, Tony Montana, Diana Dors and an array of Rebels.

GARETH CATTERMOLE/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES



THINK YOU COULD WORK HERE? THEN CADAL WANT YOU!

CADAL

Here at Cadal we're always looking for the best of the best to help maintain our state-of-the-art offshore oil platforms.

- Handy with a generator?
- Make a mean cranachan?
- Good with the electricity?

Then we want to hear from you!

Alongside a competitive salary, Cadal offers comfortable accommodation, friendly colleagues, and a chance to explore the unknown! So find out today if you've got it what takes to be part of the Cadal crew. Enquire now!

Call 0325 39

EDITED BY
LAUREN MILES
@LAUREN_M1LES

EXCLUSIVE

TEASERS

FOLEY GRAIL

BEVERLY HILLS COP: AXEL F After 30 years, Axel Foley returns to the screen to deliver quips and chaos in Mark Molloy's fourquel...

A new Beverly Hills Cop movie has been in the works for a long time. Various scripts have been written and discarded over the years, but exactly three decades on from the John Landis-directed third film, a fourth iteration – *Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F* – has finally landed.

'It's taken a long time to find the magic recipe for Eddie Murphy to come back and play Axel Foley,' says debut director Mark Molloy, acknowledging the project's long history. A fan of the franchise himself, he believes this film making it to production hinges on one thing: the script. 'It gave me everything I wanted from a Beverly Hills Cop film but it also gave me something that I didn't expect. There's an emotional undercurrent to the story that really drew me in and I felt that we had a chance to see Axel Foley in a light we've never seen before.'

Murphy serves as a producer on the film as well as returning to the lead role, and Molloy explains that he had a strong vision for the legacy sequel from the beginning. 'It's been 30 years since he last played Axel Foley, but he still had such a strong awareness of the character and of what the film should be.'

Foley may be returning to Beverly Hills, but this sequel takes the charismatic cop into some unfamiliar territory – fatherhood. In fact, his return to LA is prompted by his estranged daughter Jane (Taylour Paige) coming under threat. She's not the only new addition to the cast. Joseph Gordon-Levitt plays Bobby, a detective who happens to be Jane's ex-boyfriend, and Kevin Bacon takes on the role of the BHPD's Captain Grant.

Some things, however, remain

Joseph Gordon-Levitt (with Murphy) plays Detective Bobby Abbott

Eddie Murphy returns as wise-cracking detective Axel Foley

Axel with his daughter Jane (Taylour Paige) and new partner Bobby

the same, and one of those things is Axel Foley's demeanour. 'He's kind of grown up, but he hasn't grown up – he's still causing chaos everywhere he goes,' Molloy grins.

Another crucial consistency is a number of returning cast members, including Judge Reinhold's Billy Rosewood. 'I had a meeting with all the original cast,' the director recalls of getting the gang back together. 'I told them my vision for the film and the respect I had for the franchise and everything like that, and my approach to the film, and they all bought [into] it instantly.'

One thing he knew needed to happen for the sequel to work was to find the right person to play Axel's daughter, Jane. 'To go toe to toe with Eddie Murphy is a very, very hard thing to do,' he says, but Taylour Paige did it. 'I saw a spark, a thing within her that I felt could be really special with Eddie.'

Jane's clearly a fiery personality, and Molloy even goes so far as to describe her as Axel's 'kryptonite'. 'We've seen Axel Foley deal with a whole range of bad guys, but what I loved about it was his daughter is the one thing that he can't control – [the one thing] that Axel's wit, charm and humour doesn't work on.'

Who exactly might be threatening her life in the film is a detail that Molloy is keeping to himself, but he's able to get candid about the inspiration behind them. 'I'm not from Beverly Hills. I'm from a farm in Australia, but every time I go to Beverly Hills I'm almost scared. There's almost this perfection that was sort of radiating from everyone and I get a little intimidated and frightened by these perfect people there.' Perhaps they're influencers, then?

Molloy also understood the importance of getting the film's music right. 'The *Beverly Hills Cop* soundtrack is one of the biggest-selling soundtracks of all time, so we really wanted to lean in and use some of the music from the previous ones,' he explains. But there was one part of Harold Faltermeyer's score that he was particularly excited to incorporate. 'I got to use *Axel F* – it was like someone handed me a gold nugget!'

A legacy sequel to an 80s action comedy wouldn't be complete without its fair share of set-pieces. Molloy was keen to get stuck in – and to make it as hard for himself as possible by shooting everything in-camera. 'I wanted to go back to those old Tony Scott days and do everything in-camera, make it very visceral, make it really immediate, and also make some mistakes!' he says. 'There's no mistakes and spontaneity in a lot of action scenes these days because they're all so heavily choreographed.'

The director wanted to shoot everything in and around Beverly Hills, and reveals that Rodeo Drive was shut down for a week while they were filming: 'I think the residents of Beverly Hills hate me now, because I shut down that city for a long time.' They also closed the 10 freeway to throw 'a car out of a building. This is an 80s action comedy. A lot of police cars get totalled, I can promise you,' he adds.

As for where the franchise goes next, that's a bit of a mystery. 'We've definitely left with the door open to see what happens next,' Molloy admits. 'Who knows what will happen after this?' One thing he does know is what he'll be up to before any talk of a possible fifth movie is underway. 'I'm looking at doing a holiday next, I can tell you that much!' **LAUREN MILES**

'A lot of police cars get totalled, I can promise you'
MARK MOLLOY

John Taggart (John Ashton), Axel and Billy Rosewood (Judge Reinhold)

BEVERLY HILLS COP: AXEL F STREAMS ON NETFLIX ON 3 JULY.

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Director Mark Molloy on set

NETFLIX

HOT RIGHT NOW

JULIA GARNER IS RIDING A WAVE

They're both ruthless women,' Julia Garner said of her most prominent TV roles, *Ozark*'s Ruth Langmore and *Inventing Anna*'s Anna Sorokin. She's an artist who's made her name playing tough and ambitious characters that she often disappears into. Now, though, Garner is being recognised for her own growing star power, becoming more than a character actor.

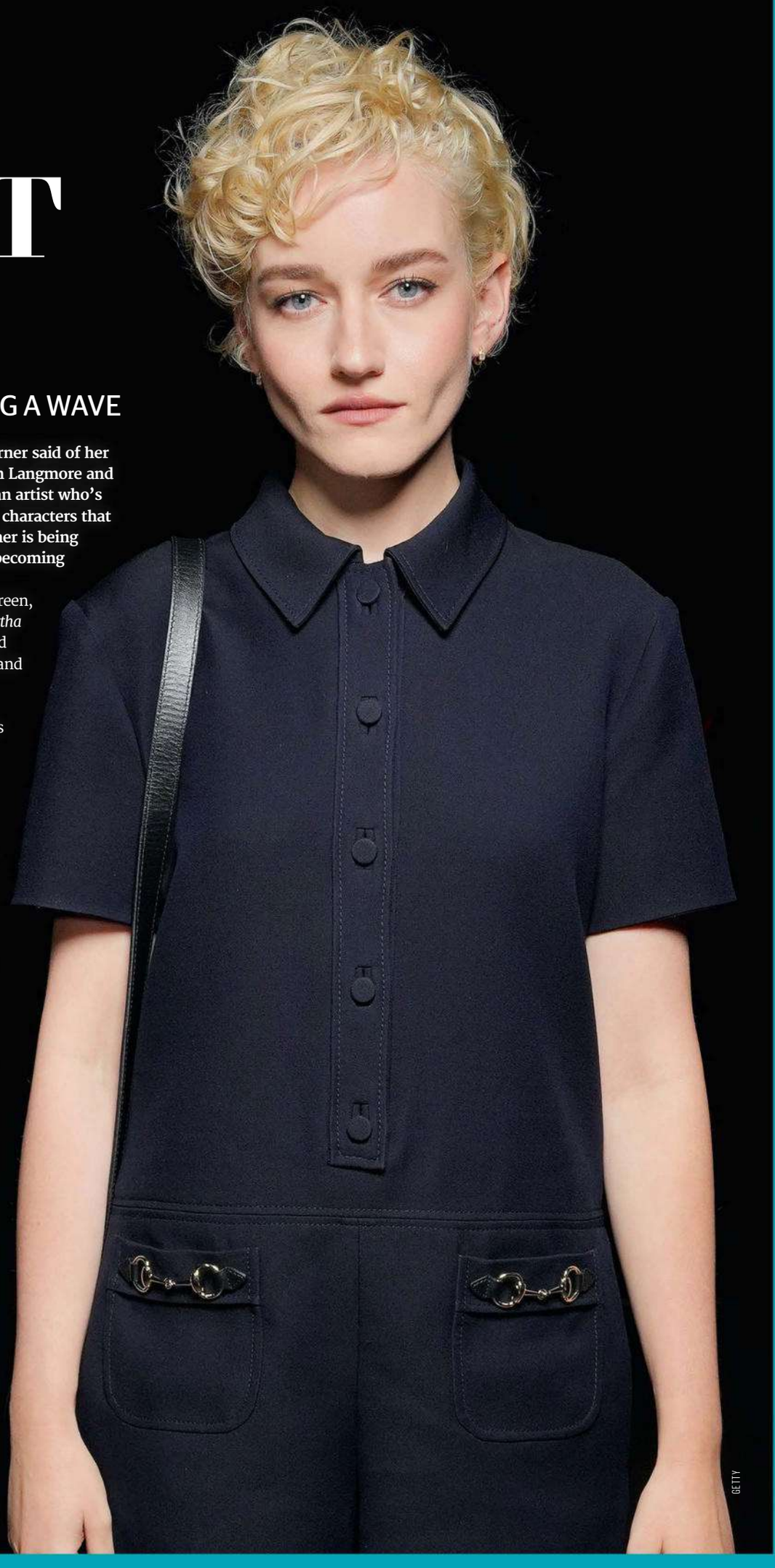
She's had a memorable career on the big screen, too, with her first role being in 2011 drama *Martha Marcy May Marlene*. More recently, she's worked with director Kitty Green on both *The Assistant* and *The Royal Hotel*. After a well-publicised and apparently gruelling boot camp, Garner also bagged the role of Madonna in the music icon's self-produced biopic. While that project was ultimately put on hold, even getting the part is a testament to Garner's talent.

Being cast as the Silver Surfer in Marvel's upcoming *Fantastic Four* movie is certain to lead to even more recognition. In many of the comics (and 2007's *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*) the character is male and works for a world-destroying villain, but there is a female version, named Shalla-Bal, that also exists. It's likely this is who Garner's playing, and it very much feels like a continuation of that predilection for ruthless roles.

While working on such a blockbuster will make Garner a household name, it's her other upcoming ventures that are even more interesting: she's taking on the lead role in *Apartment 7A* – a project that's sure to attract a lot of attention as it's a prequel to cult classic *Rosemary's Baby*; she's also working with *The Invisible Man* director Leigh Whannell on his upcoming movie *Wolf Man*; and it was announced recently that she'll star in Zach Cregger's (*Barbarian*) latest horror/thriller *Weapons*. Is there an opportunity here for the actor to reinvent herself as a Scream Queen?

Either way, it's clear that Garner is looking for diverse, unconventional roles, where the female protagonist possesses those key elements of being driven, ambitious – and ruthless. **LAUREN MILES**

APARTMENT 7A STREAMS ON PARAMOUNT+ THIS AUTUMN. WOLF MAN OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 17 JANUARY 2025.



GETTY

Night terror: a happy couple's life is turned upside down by the husband's sleep disorder

EXCLUSIVE

REST IN PIECES

SLEEP The South Korean mystery thriller that's keeping everyone up at night...

I have some nasty sleeping habits that torment my wife,' confesses South Korean writer/director Jason Yu with a guilty grin. 'I snore very loudly and I have sleep apnoea – I stop breathing for long periods of time. I guess, subconsciously, I've wondered, "What would happen if the level of these symptoms gradually grow more threatening?"'

It was Yu's turbulent sleep patterns, along with his dark fascination for the kind of sleepwalking accidents you sometimes hear of in the news ('Somebody jumping off a building, or harming a loved one') that shaped the decidedly creepy plot of *Sleep*. Set largely in a single apartment, it sees the loving marriage of Soo-jin (Jung Yu-mi) and Hyun-su (Lee Sun-kyun) put under strain when Hyun-su's sleepwalking (and talking) escalates to scary extremes. Nothing is able to stop it – not a tightly corded sleeping bag, or a bolt on the bedroom door – and soon the pregnant Soo-jin feels endangered.

An assistant director on Bong Joon-ho's giant-pig movie *Okja*, Yu says he learned everything he knows from the Korean master behind such exemplary chillers as *Memories of Murder* and *Parasite*. It was Bong's long, deep shadow that loomed over Yu as he refashioned his first-draft script from a found-footage horror movie with baby cams into something more unusual and interesting, and as he drew up storyboards and adhered to them while shooting on a tight schedule and budget in a contained space.

'In chapter three, all hell breaks loose!'
JASON YU

Lee Sun-kyun and Jung Yu-mi play newly-weds Hyun-su and Soo-jin

'It was challenging,' says Yu of the compressed shoot, pointing out that the apartment was actually a set but there was not enough money for moveable walls and all of the other cheats that a build usually provides. 'It can become very bland very quickly, so our main goal was to provide a variety of looks. We made it so the production design mirrored the psychology of the protagonists. In act one, we wanted to emphasise the love of the two characters, so we made it cosy and warm, with a lot of two-shots. The second chapter, we accentuate the claustrophobia that the wife is feeling, making the house like a cold, sterile jail cell, with a lot of shadows. And in chapter three, all hell breaks loose!'

From the Nightmare on Elm Street and Paranormal Activity movies to documentaries on sleep paralysis, the terror of switching off for eight hours, leaving your body vulnerable, has been mined by filmmakers. Yu's *Sleep* has reawakened the interest, making audiences sit bolt upright at international festivals. Studios are now queuing up to work with Yu, so what might we expect next?

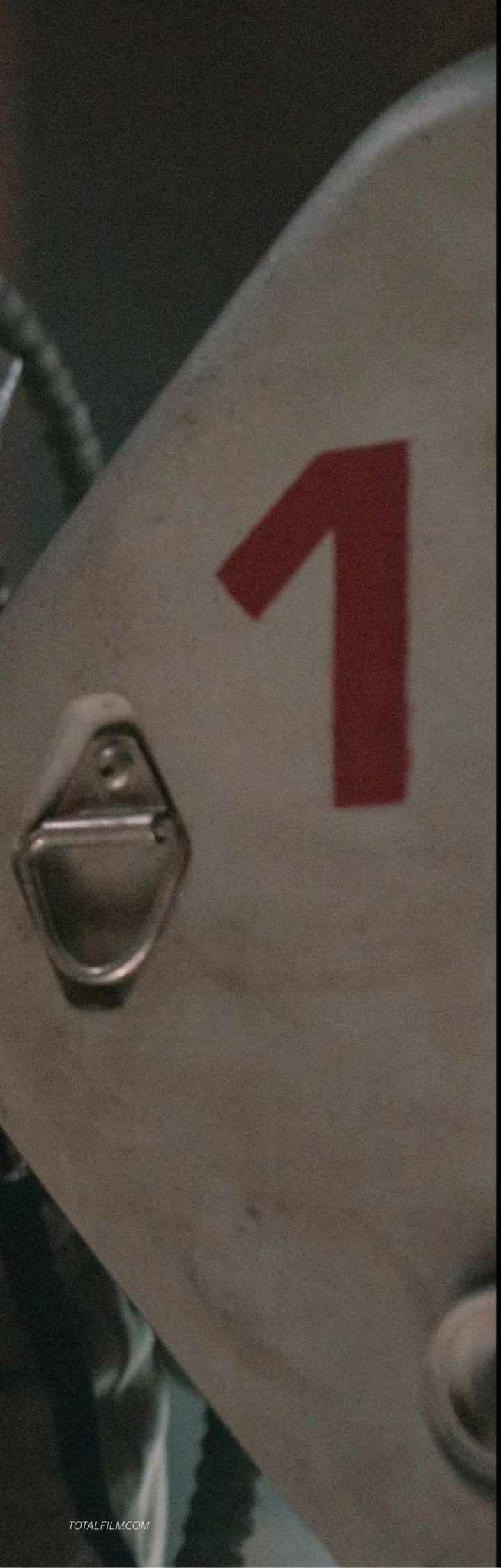
'My favourite genre is romantic comedies,' he beams. 'To create my own one is a dream...' **JAMIE GRAHAM**

SLEEP OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 12 JULY.

OUR ZON

DISNEY/20TH CENTURY STUDIOS

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS



EXCLUSIVE

PRIMAL FEAR

ALIEN: ROMULUS The iconic sci-fi horror series goes back to terrifying basics. Be afraid...

Fede Alvarez is fit to burst. No, the Uruguayan director behind *Evil Dead*, *Don't Breathe* and *The Girl in the Spider's Web* hasn't had a run-in with a facehugger. He's talking to *Teasers* shortly after the first trailer for *Alien: Romulus* unleashed to an egg-static reception, and the typically laid-back filmmaker is thrilled that audiences are chiming with his stripped-back vision for a series that's found itself a long way from its roots with recent instalments.

'That's what I wanted to see as a fan. That was what I was missing, in a way,' Alvarez says. '*Alien*, above all, is a pure horror movie. It's as elevated as it can be. But at its core, they're very simple, straightforward storytelling machines that focus on just punishing the audience with horror over and over. That's what I wanted to write.'

Set, tantalisingly, between Ridley Scott's seminal '79 original and James Cameron's superlative sequel, *Romulus* follows a young crew of scavengers – among their number 'surrogate siblings' Raines Carradine (Cailee Spaeny) and synthetic human Andy (David Jonsson) – who have a close encounter with the perfect organism aboard abandoned Weyland-Yutani research vessel *Renaissance*. The film's place in the timeline doesn't just have narrative consequences, it also reflects Alvarez's stylistic approach.

'[*Romulus*] is an amalgamation of *Alien* and *Aliens* on many levels,' notes Alvarez, who embraced many of the same practical filmmaking techniques as Scott and Cameron, down to the use of animatronic creature effects and men in Xenomorph suits. 'The environments, and the pace of it as well – it's more similar to *Alien* for quite a bit. And then gradually – you won't even know – you feel like it's more *Aliens*. It's a natural progression, and it happens effortlessly.'

'The environments, and the pace of it – it's more similar to *Alien*... And then gradually you feel like it's more *Aliens*'
FEDE ALVAREZ

A credited producer on the film, Scott was instrumental in getting Alvarez the most coveted gig in sci-fi horror. Cameron might not be officially involved, but the legendary filmmaker provided notes on the script during an extensive call with Alvarez and co-writer Rodo Sayagues that delved into details as granular as the size of the engines on the film's ships. 'At the end of the phone call, he thanked us for letting him brainstorm with us, which I found hilarious. I was like, "You don't have to thank us; it's the best day ever for us!"'

Despite promising 'connections' to the wider series, and with a now dense mythology to draw from, Alvarez claims that *Romulus*, first and foremost, aims to fright and delight. 'You want to give something to the audience so that while they're experiencing it in the theatre, they go, "Fuck, I've never seen this in a movie before, and it's fucking shocking and scary and delicious, all at the same time."' **JORDAN FARLEY**

ALIEN: ROMULUS OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 16 AUGUST.

YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

FILM QUOTES POSE AS QUESTIONS. FILM STARS TRY TO COPE.

IN THE CROSSHAIRS THIS MONTH... PATTON OSWALT

You talkin' to me?
I am talking to you, after I listen to you, and here's what a movie nerd I am – I know that everyone says, 'Oh, that's *Taxi Driver*,' but it's [inspired by] the movie *Shane* and Travis Bickle is quoting the dialogue at the bar between Shane and the guy he gets in a fight with. Sorry, I'm a big nerd!

Do you have an off switch?
I do have an off switch and unfortunately it's called social media and Twitter. That's when I kind of disengage from the world and deal with this fake world of electrons. That's my off switch.

Who's more foolish, the fool or the fool who follows him?
That's Ben Kenobi talking to Han Solo [in *Star Wars*]. I think the fool is still the more foolish because he has to do the stupid stuff first. The fool following him is just doing secondhand foolishness.

What's normal, anyways?
I don't think that there is a 'normal'. I think that's why there's so much anxiety and tension. There's people that are trying to cling to what used to be normal because those are rules you can learn; it's like 'OK, good, I know the rules, I can just survive.' But if we throw those rules out the window, that makes a lot of people really agitated.

What's your favourite scary movie?
I'm not trying to be a movie snob – but [for me] nothing tops the original *Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. To this day, the movie itself looks like it's evil. The film stock looks like it's evil. The whole movie is infected with evil.

What kind of a man are you?
Anyone who tells you what kind of man or woman or person they are, and they're not at the end of their life, they don't know yet. You don't know until you get to the very end. That's when you know.

We all go a little mad sometimes, haven't you?
Yes – all you gotta do is look at my eBay purchases to confirm that!

What will you be drinking, sir?
Is that Lloyd, the bartender from *The Shining*? I will either be drinking a red wine from the Barossa Valley of Australia – any red wine that comes out of there is delicious – or a single malt Scotch, preferably an Auchentoshan or a McCarthy's. No ice. No mixer. Ice water on the side to chase it if you need it. Neat.

Why don't you tell me the story of your life?
What's really great about asking someone the story of their life is you're always asking them to pause in the middle of it and do a 'previously on' rather than give you the entire story. That's what I love about that question.

Stand-up comedian and actor Patton Oswalt hosting game show *The 1% Club*

Do you feel lucky, punk?
I've got to say there are times when I have felt lucky. But what's weird about luck is a lot of times when you feel lucky, it doesn't pay off, and a lot of times when you think, 'Well, I'm totally screwed', that's when luck likes to jump in and surprise you. I think luck likes the ambush better than the pay-off.

Aren't you a little short for a Stormtrooper?
Citizen Kane! No – that's *Star Wars*. I am definitely a little short for a Stormtrooper. I'm short for an Ewok! Are you kidding? Short for a Stormtrooper?

Do you think there's anything wrong with your mind, really?
I actually don't think that there is anything wrong with anyone's mind. Even a mind that's been damaged is a mind that is trying to compensate for any kind of abuse that's been done to it and still function. So in a weird way, even a damaged mind, by definition, is a mind that has adapted and rewired itself to try to survive and cope.

Why do you do it? Why get up? Why keep fighting?
The fact that you are fighting – even if you're going to lose – that's the life force welling up in you more than anything else. It's Paul Newman still taking swings at George Kennedy in *Cool Hand Luke*, even though he's got nothing left. He's just got a big handful of nothing, and he keeps coming back. And that's what life is.

How do you tell how good bread is without tasting it?
It's *Ratatouille*. That phrase, which seems very simple and throwaway – how do you know how anything is unless you do it? I mean, when people ask me, 'How do I become a comedian?' Find a place and start going on stage and then boom, that's what you're doing now. So you have to take a bite of the bread. **LAUREN MILES**

THE 1% CLUB IS STREAMING NOW ON PRIME VIDEO IN THE US, WITH A UK DATE TBC.

AMAZON STUDIOS, GETTY

QUESTIONS TAKEN FROM: TAXI DRIVER, DEADPOOL, STAR WARS: EPISODE IV - A NEW HOPE, FORREST GUMP, SCREAM, 12 ANGRY MEN, PSYCHO, THE SHINING, WHEN HARRY MET SALLY..., DIRTY HARRY, STAR WARS: EPISODE IV - A NEW HOPE, ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST, THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS, RATATOUILLE

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

ON SALE NOW!

Available at **WHSmith**,
or simply search for 'T3' in your device's App Store

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND SAVE!
www.magazinesdirect.com/t3-magazine

pocketmags Available on the App Store zinio™

EXCLUSIVE

RUNNING MEN

BAD BOYS: RIDE OR DIE Will Smith and Martin Lawrence are fugitives in the summer's biggest action comedy...

The Bad Boys are now the bad guys,' teases Bilall Fallah, co-director of *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*, part four of Will Smith and Martin Lawrence's explosion-and-slow-mo-lovin' hit action series. Bilall & Adil (Fallah is one half of a directing duo with Adil El Arbi) follow up their 2020 threequel *Bad Boys for Life* by placing Miami's toughest cops in a sticky situation. 'They're on the run, trying to hide and escape,' Fallah tells *Teasers*. 'They've been locking up all these gangsters and now they're being chased by them *and* the police. It's very cool.'

The last time we saw Detectives Mike Lowrey (Smith) and Marcus Burnett (Lawrence), life had taken a turn. Mike learned Armando (Jacob Scipio), the deadly son of a cartel kingpin, was his estranged son just as Marcus' retirement plans were scuppered by the death of the duo's long-time boss and series fan-fave Captain Howard (Joe Pantoliano). While El Arbi and Fallah remain tight-lipped on plot nuggets, they do let slip that *Ride or Die* will deal with the fallout of these events.

'Captain Howard's death plays a very important part,' reveals El Arbi, explaining how Mike and Marcus become fugitives while trying to clear Captain Howard's good name. 'He's an integral part of the franchise so we were really happy to include him in such a meaningful way.' Fallah adds: 'It's a new chapter in Mike and Marcus' lives. Marcus is going through a very special experience and Mike is also changing – but it's still based on the story of Armando. We pick it up from there.'

So who's behind this new plot to bring down the Bad Boys? The pair can't say much, but according to Fallah, 'Eric Dane is a magnificent villain. He's always one step ahead so it's going to require some thinking to fight him.'

With newcomers like Rhea Seehorn and comedian Tiffany Haddish, *Ride or Die* promises to deliver drama, action and gags. 'This one's much more of a comedy,' confirms El Arbi. '*Bad Boys II* remains a massive part of cinema history so we tried to

SONY PICTURES RELEASING

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

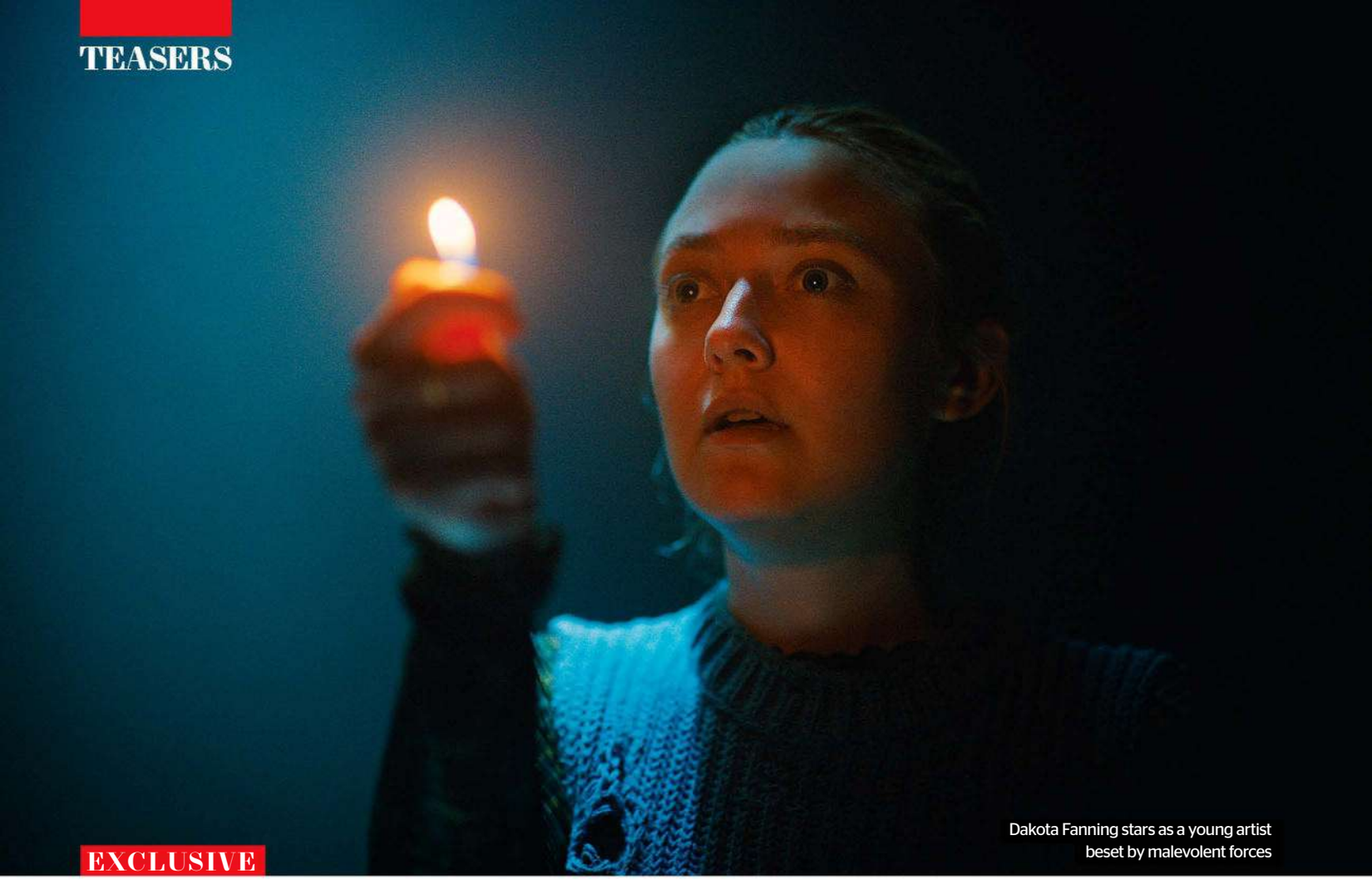
'They've been locking up all these gangsters and now they're being chased by them *and* the police'
BILALL FALLAH

Directors Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah on set with star Will Smith

match that [action] vibe in every way we could by using the craziest camera angles. We're very much inspired by video games, too,' he says. 'The action's really big,' assures Fallah. 'A Bad Boys movie is absolutely something you want to experience on the big screen.'

As for whether this is the last we've seen of Mike and Marcus? 'We thought *Bad Boys for Life* was going to be the final movie, that's why we called it *Bad Boys for Life*,' laughs El Arbi, 'but anything's possible.' Could Bad Boys become the new Mission: Impossible? 'Maybe,' smiles Fallah. 'We've got to keep running like Tom Cruise!' **SIMON BLAND**

BAD BOYS: RIDE OR DIE OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 5 JUNE.



Dakota Fanning stars as a young artist beset by malevolent forces

EXCLUSIVE

PEEP SHOW

THE WATCHED A stranded young artist is observed by a sinister presence in Ishana Night Shyamalan's feature directorial debut...

Ishana Night Shyamalan readily admits that making a horror film for her debut feature was in some ways inevitable. Having spent her childhood watching her director father, M. Night Shyamalan, hard at work, and getting her first directing experience on the second unit of *Old* and *Knock at the Cabin*, it was natural that she would turn to the genre for her first film, *The Watched*.

Director Ishana Night Shyamalan and cast on set

'I feel, kind of oddly, a sense of peace after watching horror,' the writer-director says. But that was far from the feeling she got from reading A.M. Shine's novel *The Watchers*, the book she's adapted for the screen with this movie, instead describing a sense of being 'really, really uneasy'.

That unease comes from the fraught situation of protagonist Mina (Dakota Fanning) who's left stranded in a creepy Irish woodland with no working phone. If that wasn't bad enough, she finds herself being watched by mysterious and sinister creatures.

They're as much an enigma to us as they are to Mina. 'I think the joy of the experience is what you're not allowed to see,' Shyamalan explains of hiding the movie's antagonists. 'I was kind of taught that by *Jaws*, that the premise of keeping a threat off-camera is one of the most frustrating and scary things you can do. The idea that you're being observed by something that you can't see, that you don't know what it is, is a very, very scary thing.'

Her reference to *Jaws* shows that the director has been drawing ideas and encouragement from a variety of films. 'I've been inspired by the more visual filmmakers, like Wong Kar-wai; I love the way Tim Burton plays with creating visual spaces. Tone-wise, I was very much inspired by this sense of nature horror, just kind of using the things that exist in environments to create suspense,' she says, naming both Kaneto Shindô's classic historical horror *Onibaba* and Lars von Trier's *Antichrist* as key influences.

Of course, she's also been encouraged by watching her father at work – 'I grew up on his sets!' – and found his presence on *The Watched* as a producer to be both focusing and calming. But it's also been refreshing for the novice director to turn the tables. 'He actually shot a bunch of the second unit on my movie, so that was a really wonderful role reversal.'

In a nice twist of fate, father and daughter will be going head to head over the summer, with both releasing their own horror movie (M. Night's *Trap* is out in August). But from the younger Shyamalan's perspective, there's no sense of competition. 'It's been such a wonderful thing to have my dad and me go through the same experiences at the same time. It feels, in my first time doing this, that I'm not alone.' **LAUREN MILES**

'I was taught by *Jaws*... that premise of keeping a threat off-camera'
ISHANA NIGHT SHYAMALAN

THE WATCHED OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 7 JUNE.

WARNER BROS

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

SOUND BYTES

The month in dialogue and digits.

‘ANGRY BIRDS JUST DESTROYED US.’

RYAN GOSLING CHALKS UP THE LACK OF A SEQUEL FOR *THE NICE GUYS* TO BOX-OFFICE PERFORMANCE.

‘You look at some of the best films of the past year – what do they have in common? They’re not from America.’

JESSICA LANGE ON AN INCREASINGLY PROFIT-DRIVEN US FILM INDUSTRY.

$14.5m

THE IMPRESSIVE BOX-OFFICE HAUL OF **THE PHANTOM MENACE**’S GLOBAL RERELEASE.

$500m

ANIMALS DOING MARTIAL ARTS PROVES TO BE POPULAR, AS **KUNG FU PANDA 4** HAS MADE MORE THAN HALF-A-BILLION AT THE BOX OFFICE.

‘AS LONG AS I’M STILL YOUNG ENOUGH TO PLAY IT, I’LL PLAY IT. CHRIS WILL HAVE TO WAIT HIS TURN.’

CHRIS HEMSWORTH WANTS TO PLAY THE LEAD IN A NEW **KEVIN COSTNER** FILM. COSTNER’S HAVING NONE OF IT.

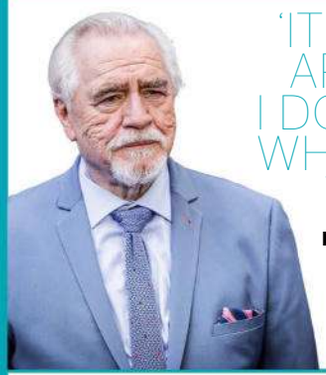
GETTY

DOUBLE TROUBLE
MARTIN SCORSESE IS DEVELOPING TWO MAJOR MOVIES AT ONCE – *A LIFE OF JESUS* AND A FRANK SINATRA BIOPIC.

GOOD THING

BAD THING

CANCELLED CRITIC
QUENTIN TARANTINO HAS SCRAPPED *THE MOVIE CRITIC*, WHICH WAS INTENDED TO BE HIS FINAL FILM.



‘IT REALLY IS APPALLING. I DON’T KNOW WHAT HE WAS THINKING.’

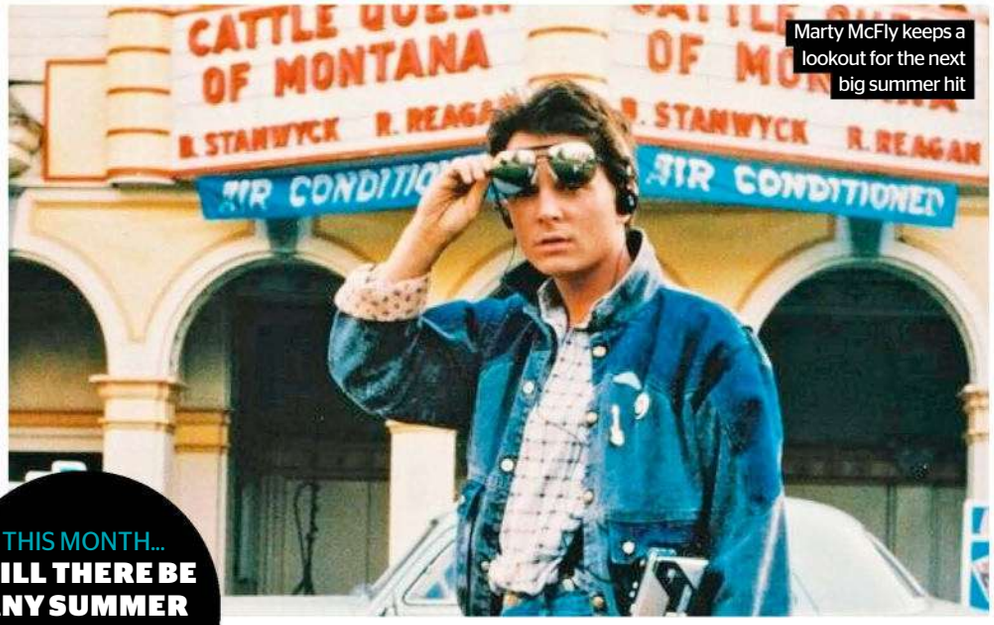
BRIAN COX DOESN’T HOLD BACK HIS THOUGHTS ON JOAQUIN PHOENIX’S PERFORMANCE IN *NAPOLEON*.

‘YOU SICK OF ASKING THAT QUESTION? HAVE A GOOD ONE.’

AARON TAYLOR-JOHNSON IS FED UP WITH BEING QUIZZED ABOUT JAMES BOND RUMOURS.

THE LEILA WORD

Contributing editor **LEILA LATIF** has something to say...



Marty McFly keeps a lookout for the next big summer hit

THIS MONTH...
WILL THERE BE ANY SUMMER EVENT MOVIES THIS YEAR?

You only need to look at what I chose to wear in the picture for this column to know that I love a summer blockbuster. Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* was released in June 1975 and spent 14 weeks as the No.1 movie in America, revolutionising the release model, where previously the summer was a dumping ground for lesser films.

Jaws became the highest-grossing film of all time and *Star Wars* broke that record in the summer of 1977. The continued success of *Alien* (1979), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), and *E.T.* (1982) would solidify that, during the summer, there's nothing better than taking a break from the heat, settling down into a cool, dark, air-conditioned room and taking in some movie magic. They are communal experiences where we share in the sheer joy of cinema.

Last year was dominated by the phenomenon that was *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*, which famously both hit the multiplex on 21 July, and before that *Top Gun: Maverick* was considered the saviour of summer 2022. And these were not the easiest of summers to make bank – the long-delayed *Top Gun* was emerging post-pandemic, and the Barbenheimer crews had to stop their press tours due to the writer and actor strikes – but the thrill of a true summer blockbuster could not be held down.

But one of the questions I got a lot around awards season this year was if the strikes had affected the quality of the films, and the answer was always 'Not yet!' But as much as cinema has always been able to adapt and innovate around its struggles, the slate ahead is looking a little patchy. There is only a single superhero movie coming out – the admittedly highly anticipated *Deadpool & Wolverine* – to go alongside *Mad Max* prequel *Furiosa*, *Bad Boys: Ride or Die* and *Kingdom of the Planets of the Apes*, which could potentially do gangbusters at the box office in a less crowded season than usual.

Post *Jaws*, many of the giant blockbusters, like *E.T.*, *Ghostbusters*, *Back to the Future* and even *Ghost*, were original movies (even if some spawned many sequels). But that changed with the MCU, and the majority of the big summer blockbusters of the 21st century have been franchise instalments.

Post-pandemic those previously safe franchise bets have been on the wane, and the most recent Transformers, Fast & Furious, Mission: Impossible and even Marvel's Phase Five films haven't made the impact of their predecessors, while singular event Barbenheimer surpassed all expectations. There seems to be a return to the yesteryear of summer blockbusters – the lure of the cinema in the stifling heat and movie-star lead vehicles could lead to huge success for Kevin Costner's epic western *Horizon: An American Saga* (released in two parts in June and August), and Jeff Nichols' *The Bikeriders* being delayed to June may work in its favour.

But my money is on *Twisters*, which seems to be a perfect blend of summer blockbuster past and present. Its high-concept spectacle has cross-generational appeal and a new movie directed by Lee Isaac Chung will bring in the cinephiles – it's an exciting prospect, which is why you'll find it on the cover of this issue. It's sequel-ly enough to have a built-in audience but far enough removed from the original to feel fresh – and let's face it, everything its star Glen Powell touches turns to gold.

Next year, hopefully, Hollywood will not have had another spanner thrown in the works and we'll get a stacked slate for the warmer months. But, in the meantime, if something fresh, fun and unexpected becomes the big hit of 2024, then that might mean next summer, 50 years on from 1975, we'll be getting a blockbuster just as exciting as *Jaws*.

LEILA WILL BE BACK NEXT ISSUE. FOR FURTHER MUSINGS AND MISSIVES FOLLOW @LEILA_LATIF ON X/TWITTER.

ALAMY

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Filmmaker Lina Soualem and her mother Hiam Abbass; (inset, below) the film explores her Palestinian family history

FIRST WORD

ORIGIN STORY

BYE BYE TIBERIAS Lina Soualem takes her actor-mother Hiam Abbass back to her roots...

After making *Their Algeria* (2020), which dealt with both her paternal grandparents and the Algerian War of Independence, filmmaker Lina Soualem was faced with one question. 'Everyone was asking, "How are you going to film your maternal family from Palestine?" I would always say, "I don't have the courage to do it. It's very intense." And finally, I think it was my mission... I was resisting because I was afraid of tackling the subject.'

Overcoming her fears, Soualem now presents her highly personal documentary *Bye Bye Tiberias*. Since 2018, the French-Palestinian-Algerian director has been combing through family archives to tell the story of four generations of Palestinian women – including her mother, the actor Hiam Abbass (*Munich*, *Succession*). Mixing home movies and photos with interviews, poetry readings and new footage, the film looks at both her own family's displacement and that of the Palestinian people.

Gaining even more poignancy due to the current conflict in the region, the focus rests on Soualem's mother, who left her Palestinian village, Deir Hanna, in her 20s to pursue a career in acting. 'For me, as a daughter, you usually know [your parents] from the moment you're born, so you don't know their youth,' says Soualem. 'It was a challenge to try to understand my mother, to see her not as a mother but as a young girl, as a young woman. I was very surprised by the childhood that she had... so different from mine.'

It's not the first time they've worked together, with Soualem appearing in Abbass' 2012 directorial effort *Inheritance* and also co-scripting the 2022 miniseries *Oussekine*, in which her mother starred. But making *Bye Bye Tiberias* was altogether more emotional. 'It was cathartic,' says Soualem. 'It allowed me to find my place, to find a voice.' Next stop a feature – maybe even with her mother. 'I feel more confident now to tackle fiction,' she says. 'I really want to explore that.'

JAMES MOTTRAM

BYE BYE TIBERIAS OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 28 JUNE.

OMAR HAMDANE, FRIDA MARZOUK/BEALL PRODUCTIONS

Hiam Abbass

How did you react when Lina came to you with this?
I said, 'Why are you doing this?' Of course, it wasn't an easy task, really. It's not like if she came and she said, 'OK, I'm doing a feature and I want you to play a part.' Playing myself in a movie, it's not really something I'm used to. And exposing my life, my family and my intimacy somehow wasn't something that I was expecting to do.

Did making this change your relationship with Lina?
Not really, we're very close. For me, as a mother, I'm really happy because I see that Lina is a confirmed filmmaker with her own style. And I see that she improved, even in the style and the way she's telling the story, and her intellect... She puts it really in the service of her art.

You featured in HBO's *Succession*. What was it like being in a phenomenon like that?
What was it like? It was great! And I'm lucky – and that's another simple answer. Every time, I kind of get overwhelmed and surprised by the fact that they want me for something. So I think, 'Why me?' When Spielberg wanted me to play in *Munich*, I told my agency, 'Come on, you're kidding!'

JAMES MOTTRAM

The third part of Goth and West's terror-tinged triptych takes us into the Los Angeles of the 1980s

EXCLUSIVE

THE XXX FACTOR

MAXXXINE After surviving the Texas massacre in *X*, Mia Goth's Maxine heads to LA...

It's a much bigger, sprawling story and it exists in a very different aesthetic to the first two movies,' says writer/director Ti West of *MaXXXine*, the feverishly anticipated follow up to *X* and *Pearl*. 'It's a 1980s aesthetic. It's poppy, but still grounded in more of a grittier 80s than a shopping-mall 80s. You're seeing the glamorous side of the movie business and the seedy side of Hollywood.'

In March 2022, A24 released *X*, a slasher movie set in 1979 Texas about a group of filmmakers who set out to make a porn movie only to suffer from premature expiration. Mia Goth played dual roles, as final girl Maxine and geriatric killer Pearl. Then, just months later, came *Pearl*, a prequel that was shot back-to-back with *X* and focused on Goth playing the eponymous slayer as a young woman on her Texas farm back in 1918. Hemmed in by threat of the Spanish Flu and by a ferociously overbearing mother, Pearl dreams of trading her domestic drudgery for fame and fortune, but instead journeys into madness and murder.

'Not everyone makes it out alive'
TI WEST

MaXXXine, set in mid-80s Los Angeles, is a sequel to *X*, with Goth playing survivor Maxine as she seeks to graduate from porn star to horror icon. 'Porn and horror are often associated as bottom of the barrel,' says West, who's talking about his new film for the first time as he makes final colour corrections. 'You don't often go from porn right to being a major blockbuster movie star. You go from one looked-down-upon thing into another looked-down-upon thing, but slightly less looked down upon!'

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Mia Goth as aspiring actor Maxine

Whereas *X* tapped into the vibe of 70s horror and *Pearl* put a demented spin on such Hollywood classics as *The Wizard of Oz* and *Mary Poppins*, *MaXXXine* boasts everything from 'a *Terminator*-like aesthetic to a Paul Schrader *Hardcore* thing to *Vice Squad* to giallo,' explains West. 'It's a very rich movie.'

No surprise there – this trilogy closer is set at a time when slasher movies were huge, when LA residents lived in fear as Richard Ramirez, aka The Night Stalker, preyed on the city (his reign of terror is woven into the very fabric of the film), and when Satanic Panic swept America. *MaXXXine* plugs into it all, casting its net wide by setting itself up as a Robert Altman-like tapestry built upon 30-plus key roles, with the starry cast including Elizabeth Debicki, Kevin Bacon, Michelle Monaghan, Bobby Cannavale, Lily Collins, Giancarlo Esposito and Moses Sumney.

'Everybody in the movie had seen the other movies and was a fan, so I didn't have to convince any of these people; they all wanted to be in it,' says West. He flashes a grin, sharp as a knife. 'Not everybody makes it out alive.' **JAMIE GRAHAM**

MAXXXINE OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 5 JULY.

NEXT B HING

EWAN MITCHELL IS ON FIRE...

Over the last 10 years Ewan Mitchell's career has been set on an impressive trajectory. At just 20 he appeared in a main role in *The Last Kingdom*. He's worked with acclaimed directors such as Claire Denis (in her English-language debut *High Life*) and Emerald Fennell (*Saltburn*). Now, he returns as Aemond Targaryen in Season 2 of *House of the Dragon*.

Is there anything you can tease about Aemond's character arc in Season 2 of *House of the Dragon*?
I don't think we've seen anyone as insidious as Aemond in Westeros. He's going to play you like a violin, and you're either with him or against him. You can either be on Rhaenyra's side or you can stay in one piece.

As a child, you went to The Television Workshop in Nottingham. What was it like honing your craft there?
It's a phenomenal platform for kids who might not possess the means, or might not know how to get into the industry, and the Workshop really does champion that raw talent.

Your first main role was in *The Last Kingdom*. Did that feel like a big step up?
It did. It was very much where I learned to work this floor and learned from all the crew. They were there with me since I was 18 years old starting on the second season, all the way to the fifth season. I'll be forever grateful for that experience, and it was sad to say goodbye.

What was it like acting opposite Barry Keoghan in *Saltburn*?
Oh, electric. He's like a lightning bolt. He's so spontaneous. You go toe-to-toe with him and you pick up a few moves in the process. You can't help but feel inspired. I can't wait to work with him again someday.

LAUREN MILES

HOUSE OF THE DRAGON SEASON 2 PREMIERES ON SKY ATLANTIC AND NOW ON 17 JUNE.

HBO / [illegible] SMITH

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Hugh Bonneville (with Alex Kingston as Sheila) stars as the titular under-fire news presenter

EXCLUSIVE

MAKING THE HEADLINES

DOUGLAS IS CANCELLED News anchors navigate trial by social media in Steven Moffat's comedy drama...

In a London studio, *Live at Six* news anchors Madeline (Karen Gillan) and Douglas (Hugh Bonneville) go through the motions, signing off with scripted zingers before the director yells cut. It's smooth, slick and professional; yet, as recent scandals have revealed, even television's national treasures hide guilty secrets which, should they get out, could lead to trial by social media. Sure enough, when an off-colour remark at a wedding goes viral, the title of the four-part comedy drama looks like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

'Being worried about what you might say in public is everybody's worry, but it's particularly the worry of a celebrity,' says series writer Steven Moffat, who originally conceived *Douglas is Cancelled* as a play. 'The producer [Ben Miles] tells Douglas, "When you're out in public, no opinions: balanced, boring and bland." That sounds dictatorial, except what do you expect from someone who's the balanced voice of news? The trouble is, Douglas has to pretend to be boring when he's not. He's an opinionated, grumpy, middle-aged man.'

As the woman whose intervention could either save or condemn Douglas, Gillan relished the many scenes of lengthy conversation. 'On a dialogue-learning level, this was really extreme,' she laughs. 'The sparring and verbal gymnastics are so much fun, especially because I'm normally being chased by aliens or monsters.'

Being reunited with Moffat after *Doctor Who* was a no-brainer, with Madeline an appealingly slippery character. 'Madeline is a few steps ahead of everyone,' Gillan explains. 'She's had to become a mastermind of human behaviour while navigating various tricky relationships during her rise, although she admires Douglas and wants to get to his level. I don't think I come across as a serious adult, but I certainly had to play Madeline!'

'The sparring and verbal gymnastics are so much fun'
KAREN GILLAN

Karen Gillan plays co-anchor Madeline

'It starts off bloody funny, but by the end you're feeling rather grubby,' Bonneville adds. 'The subject is endlessly fascinating, because we now live in a world where feelings are facts – if I feel offended by something you've said, that is a fact. Douglas finds that out the hard way. He came through at a time when media was a man's world, but now it's run by younger voices and he has to be more careful about his vocabulary. It's a world that's running away from him. He's underestimated the power of social media and the mob, and the sharks are circling.'

And what does Moffat himself make of cancel culture? 'Well, look at Donald Trump,' he says. 'No one has been more cancelled in history, but he simply doesn't care. Cancellation only works on decent human beings, so stop it.' **GABRIEL TATE**

DOUGLAS IS CANCELLED STREAMS ON ITVX IN JUNE.

The ghost with the most is back - Michael Keaton as Beetlejuice

CONVENTION ROUND-UP

CASINO ROYALE

CINEMACON The Las Vegas convention has provided sneak peeks of upcoming movies in a slew of star-studded presentations. Here are Teaser's top picks from this year's event in Sin City...

GLADIATOR 2

The Colosseum at Caesars Palace was the perfect venue for director Ridley Scott to introduce five minutes of fierce unfinished footage via video from London. The brutal scenes showcased the sequel's top-tier cast – including Denzel Washington, Pedro Pascal, Connie Nielsen and a ripped Paul Mescal – as well as murderous monkeys, soldiers on rhinos and, erm, sharks. Epic! 'Going to work every day with Sir Ridley Scott behind the camera is a good day's work in any context,' commented Mescal.

GLADIATOR 2 OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 22 NOVEMBER.

JOKER: FOLIE À DEUX

Director Todd Phillips wowed the crowds with a mesmerising trailer for *Joker 2*, which gave audiences a first glimpse at the alluring chemistry between Joaquin Phoenix and Lady Gaga. When quizzed about the musical element of the movie, Phillips explained: 'I like to say it's a movie where music is an essential element. To me, that doesn't really veer too far from the first film because Arthur [Phoenix] is weird, aloof and distant – but he has music in him.'

JOKER: FOLIE À DEUX OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 4 OCTOBER.

BEETLEJUICE BEETLEJUICE

It's taken more than 35 years for Michael Keaton to reteam with Tim Burton for the whack-a-doodle follow-up to supernatural 1988 comedy *Beetlejuice*. 'It's like a weird family reunion,' chuckled the deadpan director, who introduced an eye-popping preview alongside the cast. The spook-tacular sequel – which focuses on three generations of the Deetz family: Delia (Catherine O'Hara), Lydia (Winona Ryder) and Astrid (Jenna Ortega) – is set to utilise practical effects. How does Keaton describe the new film? 'It's really fucking good!'

BEETLEJUICE BEETLEJUICE OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 6 SEPTEMBER.

WICKED

The colourful climax to Universal's CinemaCon presentation brought *Wicked* director Jon M. Chu to tears as he recalled finding the leads for his *The Wizard of Oz* prequel in Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo. 'Casting the roles of Glinda and Elphaba was critical,' he exclaimed. 'And boy, did they blow the roof off this thing.' The never-before-seen footage revealed how Grande's Glinda and Erivo's Elphaba are forced to become unlikely roommates at Shiz University in the Land of Oz. Expect mammoth musical numbers.

WICKED OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 28 NOVEMBER.

MICHAEL

Even though the project is only halfway through production, producer Graham King presented a first-look preview of 2025's big-budget biopic. 'There are biopics and then there's Michael Jackson,' the *Bohemian Rhapsody* producer declared. 'He's an enigma full of eccentricities and an electrifying talent who is arguably the most famous entertainer to ever moonwalk across the planet.' The footage drew audible gasps from the audience with slick scenes of MJ's lookalike nephew Jaafar Jackson tackling the one-gloved titular role.

MICHAEL OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 18 APRIL 2025.

ADAM TANSWELL

Bad romance: Arthur Fleck meets Lady Gaga's Harley Quinn in *Joker: Folie à Deux*

UNIVERSAL PICTURES, WARNER BROS.

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

BETWEEN TAKES

RICHARD ARMITAGE

THE STAR OF *THE BOY IN THE WOODS* ON CPR AND STOLEN SWORDS...

What's the first thing you do when you get to set?
I put my coffee maker into the trailer, because I'm a bit of a coffee fiend and I like to be able to make my own rather than having to get nasty instant coffee!

Do you have on-set superstitions?
I don't, although I like to make it a bit my own. On *The Stranger* my character had an office and I would get in there and move things where I wanted them, and then the art department would move them all back, and then I'd move them where I want them – so there's sometimes a bit of a push and pull. But I like to feel like I've had my hands on [the props]. Then they don't become props; they become your possessions.

Do you eat a hot or cold lunch?
I don't eat on set. I'm really weird like that. It's not that I don't like catering. I'll eat my breakfast and then I'll just wait until the end of the day and eat when I get home. It sort of slows me down a bit, makes me a bit sluggish.

What was your best ever on-set experience?
I think probably The Hobbit simply because it was such an enormous production, and the sets were jaw-dropping. Some of them were digital, some practical, but walking onto a backlot in New Zealand and they'd completely built Lake-town, flooded the whole of the backlot so there were moving barges... There's just nothing I've done that's ever come close to that.

Any skills you've learnt on set that have proven useful in real life?
On *Red Eye*, a TV series I've just done, I worked with a medic who taught me how to do CPR and use a defibrillator. I haven't had to activate that yet, thank goodness, but I can keep somebody alive if they have a heart attack. That's a skill that I feel very lucky to have.

Have you ever stolen from a set?
Not stolen – I've given things to a set. I've planted things on sets that I wanted to be in the scene. In *Obsession* my character was reading a book in a scene and I was really interested in what he might be reading, so I found a book of poetry and left it on the shelf in the back of shots so that would be the book that he was reading next.

> 'PETER JACKSON PULLED ME ASIDE AND SAID, "ARE YOU HARD UP FOR MONEY? YOUR SWORD'S FOR SALE ONLINE."'

Armitage stars in the World War Two-set *The Boy in the Woods*

What was your most embarrassing moment on set?
Actually, I'm working on a fourth Harlan Coben called *Missing You* – and it was my first day on set and I'm giving a speech at a retirement party. I had to step up onto the stage and take the mic and give a speech, and I managed to spill beer on the stage. I jumped on the stage, nearly went flying on the beer, nearly dragged the entire set down, and got covered in sparkling streamers. It was my first day and no one knew who I was, and everyone's looking at me like, 'Is this part of the action?' I'm begging them to keep it in but I suspect it might end up on the blooper reel.

How did *The Boy in the Woods* compare to the average set?
It was very authentic. They found the most beautiful little wooden hut that they converted into a cottage, and I said to the director that I would quite like to stay there during the shoot. But when we got there it was so cold I thought, 'I just can't. I'll go back to the hotel.'

Most memorable end-of-shoot gift – given or received?
Orcrist, the sword from The Hobbit. I just did not expect to be gifted the original sword from the shoot. Actually, I had it in a lock-up and it got stolen, and someone was trying to sell it. Peter [Jackson, the director] pulled me aside and said, 'Are you hard up for money?' I was like, 'What are you talking about?' He said, 'Your sword's for sale online.' So I had to go through this whole thing of getting the police involved, but we got the sword back. Now it's on a shelf in a very prominent place. **LAUREN MILES**

THE BOY IN THE WOODS IS ON DIGITAL FROM 27 MAY.

101 FILMS, GETTY

EXCLUSIVE

BADDIE DAYCARE

DESPICABLE ME 4 Gru and Minions return, and there's a new addition to the family...

If there's one thing animation studio Illumination is renowned for, it's the little yellow bundles of chaos known as the Minions. They've so far had five outings, the most recent being 2022's *Minions: The Rise of Gru*. It's been a long time, though, since we last saw Gru in his grown-up anti-villain form. Seven years have passed since the last *Despicable Me* instalment, and a lot has changed for Steve Carell's protagonist and his family. *Despicable Me 4* sees them navigate life with a new baby, and if that isn't hectic enough, there's also a new villain threatening their safety...

FAMILY BUSINESS

'The fun of it is introducing a new dynamic,' says director Chris Renaud of adding Gru Jr into the mix. After helming the first and second movies in the franchise, he's returning to the director's chair, and he was excited to throw Gru a curveball in the form of a son. 'He sort of gives his dad a hard time,' he grins. 'When we thought about the character, [we were] really thinking about how to make him a reflection of how Gru was when he was that age, giving trouble to his parents and [being] a little bit hard to win over.'

TROUBLESOME TYKE

Being the child of an ex-super villain and Anti-Villain League agent means that this is no ordinary baby. 'We can definitely count on him to be a spanner in the works,' Renaud explains. 'Gru, he's a family man, he's kind of put villainy behind him, but the baby might be thrilled about villainy, and being naughty really appeals to him as a character. So of course that inspires him to want to get involved with whatever his dad is doing that maybe is not quite the good-guy stuff.'

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

MAXIME-UM VILLAINY

The growing family's peace is soon shattered by new villains that Gru has to face off against: duo Maxime Le Mal and Valentina. These antagonists are even more interesting because they're from Gru's past. 'It's fun to build that rivalry because it's got a personal undertone,' Renaud exclaims, adding that Maxime and Gru went to school together, and Valentina was the most popular girl in the class. 'It gets into that classic thing when you go back to your high school. Everybody's trying to go, "Look what I'm doing!"' The director teases that they're a couple that loves to show off.

A GRU-TIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

To protect themselves, Gru's family are forced to run away to a safe house, which is rather dull aside from the fun to be had with the vending machine. Renaud adds that the plain house contrasts with the beautiful neighbourhood it's located in. 'It automatically sets up a contrast for Gru and the family,' he explains. 'They're entering a neighbourhood where probably the neighbours look down their noses at this little tiny house. It puts the family a little bit on their back foot.'

FELINE FRIENDS

Despicable Me 4 also introduces villain-in-training Poppy, who goes to a Hogwarts-esque school for aspiring bad guys. Her sidekick is a cat, an animal Renaud particularly wanted to include. 'I directed the two *Secret Life of Pets* movies and there's just something about cats as an accent,' he laughs. 'You don't even have to do much!' The director adds that it's often getting up to mischief in the background of scenes. 'And it's the idea that this kid takes the time to put her cat in a costume, which, if you've ever seen a cat in a costume, they hate it! It just works on a few levels.'

MINION IMPOSSIBLE

Poppy, it turns out, is central to one of the movie's set-pieces. 'She wants to use Gru's talents to help her steal a honey badger, which is the school mascot,' Renaud explains. Guarding the school is a character that he actually voices – the Principal. 'She seems exactly like a dainty little old lady. We have no clue. And it's not until the group goes back to the school that we have any idea that she's a force to be reckoned with, and a bit scary!' **LAUREN MILES**

DESPICABLE ME 4 OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 12 JULY.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Lily Gladstone (right) plays the aunt of teenage Roki (Isabel Deroy-Olson), whose mother is missing

EXCLUSIVE

RESERVATION ROAD

FANCY DANCE Lily Gladstone embarks on a dangerous journey to seek justice in Erica Tremblay's riveting debut.

Native people are extremely vulnerable, and violent crimes committed against them often go uninvestigated,' says writer-director Erica Tremblay. 'There's not a day goes by that I don't log onto social media and see missing posters. If you look at the statistics… most crimes happen in communities, right? Violence happens within the groups that you live. But 86% of violence perpetrated on Native women is done by non-Native people.'

Making her narrative feature debut with *Fancy Dance* after directing documentaries and episodes of Taika Waititi's *Reservation Dogs*, Tremblay here uses one intimate story to examine the current crisis of missing Natives in America. The setting is the Seneca-Cayuga reservation in northeastern Oklahoma where Tremblay grew up, as Jax (Lily Gladstone), a queer 30-something subsisting on scams, and her 13-year-old niece Roki (newcomer Isabel Deroy-Olson) search for their missing sister/mum Tawi (Hauli Gray). Their pursuit leads them through a landscape blotted by poverty, crime, drugs and racism.

'Anywhere there are high levels of poverty there's going to be high levels of crime,' Tremblay points out. 'You have to stop and ask yourself, "Is this on purpose?" Because reservations in and of themselves are created to be isolated and disenfranchised.'

But *Fancy Dance* moves to its own rhythms, spotlighting the dark, hardscrabble drama with moments of joy and optimism, love and resilience. Tremblay began with the image of Native women dancing at the annual pow-wow, and set out to make a 'love story to matriarchal kinship'. So while the crime elements propel the story, she points out that people on reservations are also 'watching TV, fighting with their moms, having sex, putting on nail polish, laughing, loving, eating…'

As for Gladstone's magnetic presence at the centre of the film, Tremblay hopes that *Killers of the Flower Moon* has whetted audience appetite for both the Oscar-nominated actor and Native stories. But it's not opportunist casting – Gladstone starred in Tremblay's 2020 short *Little Chief*, and the director's been a fan since watching Kelly Reichardt's *Certain Women*: 'From the moment I saw Lily's face, I was in love.'

JAMIE GRAHAM

FANCY DANCE OPENS IN SELECT CINEMAS AND WILL BE AVAILABLE ON APPLE TV+ ON 28 JUNE.

Erica Tremblay's film celebrates the women's joy as well as their struggles

APPLE TV+ GETTY

Q&A

Lily Gladstone

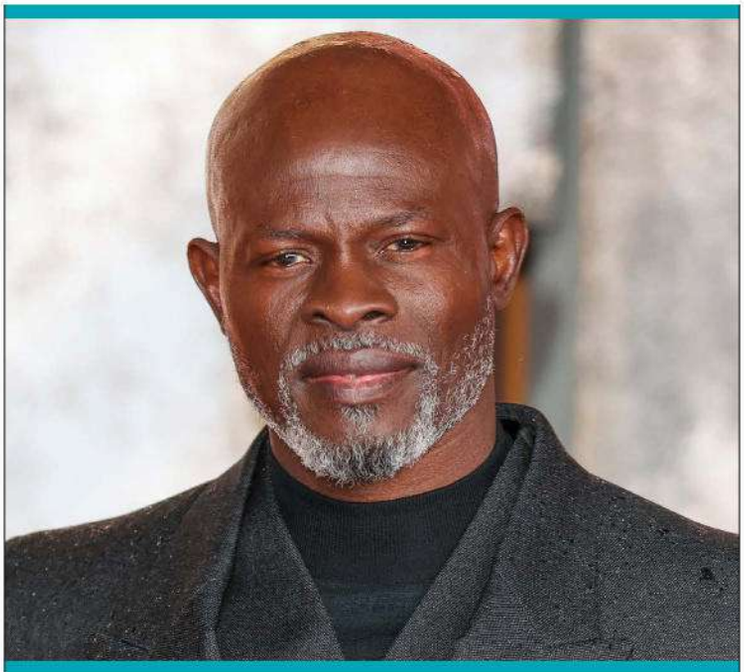
Jax isn't always easy to like. Was it liberating to not play squeaky clean?
Absolutely. Especially as a Native woman. I feel a lot of non-white, non-male actors, when we do get leading roles, they're too perfect. It's the model minority – we have the space on screen if we're an example of our people. So it's great to show a character that's doing what needs to be done, with the hand she's dealt.

***Killers of the Flower Moon* was excellent but this feels like a step forward, to have a director telling a story pertaining to her own culture…**
Martin Scorsese broke the door down and got people falling in love with a Native woman, then you go into *Fancy Dance* and every ounce of screen time is eaten up by Native women and their love for each other, their endurance and survival.

Are you getting more opportunities after your Oscar nomination?
I'm seeing a great diversity of projects. It's showing me that people's perception of where Natives can be on film, and in stories, is wide open. We can expand from the boxes we've been pigeon-holed into. That is meaningful. It's a beautiful time to advocate for other stories and storytellers, while – what do they say? – while the iron's hot. **JG**

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

THE HERO



DJIMON HOUNSOU

THE BENINESE-BORN ACTOR ON MAKING NOISE, MAKING MOVIES AND MAKING YOUR OWN LUCK...

From modelling and music videos to Oscar nominations for *In America* and *Blood Diamond*, Djimon Hounsou has come a long way in his thirty-plus-year career. Epic directors (Steven Spielberg, Ridley Scott) are seemingly just the norm for the 60-year-old actor from Benin, who now picks up his mysterious character in horror prequel *A Quiet Place: Day One*. Pray silence, please…

Do you feel audiences will be shocked by what *A Quiet Place: Day One* has in store?
For sure. I think there's a huge anticipation about what happened on Day One. And in this instance, having Day One be staged in the city of millions. Of course, in New York City, sound is especially unpredictable and dangerous, making it even more exciting to have Day One taking place there. Having to shut down a city, the noisiest city in the world… that's pretty spectacular.

Are you a horror fan?
In my youth growing up in France, I was really into horror films. But shortly after that, in my early twenties, I started having some distance from horror films. I just didn't enjoy the headache and emotional rollercoaster that it takes to enjoy a horror film. But I really did enjoy the first [*A Quiet Place*] that John Krasinski did, and of course, having the chance to be in the second one was quite wonderful.

We've also just seen you in Zack Snyder's *Rebel Moon - Part Two: The Scargiver*. Is it true you knew Zack years ago?
When I first arrived in California trying to pursue acting, I didn't speak English. And he was in film school. And we met briefly and I posed for him. So that was how we first met. And little did I know that this young man that I met in film school, thirty-something years ago, is the same one who did all these great films like *300* and *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice*.

What was it like when you first came to America?
My first day in California I went to Hollywood Boulevard to see what defines Hollywood when we watch a movie. In the early nineties – I was quite shocked and surprised by the look of Hollywood at that time. And had a sense of depression because that was not the vision I had when, every time, you were looking at a Hollywood movie. So that really intimidated me.

You've worked with a remarkable array of directors, like Ridley Scott, Steven Spielberg and Ed Zwick. Is that something you reflect on ever?
Yeah. I just had my birthday a couple of days ago and I was reflecting on the journey up until now; how amazing it is that nothing happens by accident. You really kind of have to want something or wish for something for it to happen. Very little happens by accident, [it's] by luck.

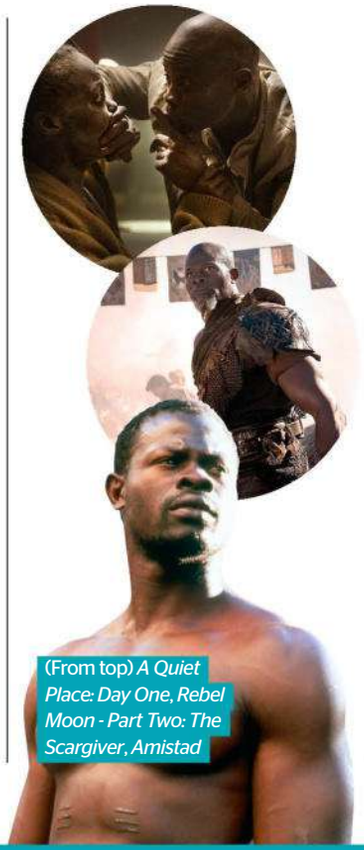
Do you look at Spielberg's *Amistad* as a key turning point?
Oh for sure. That is the moment for me. That was a grand moment. I don't even know how to quantify it. At the time when it was happening, it felt surreal. And I was in a trance. I don't know where I was. By the time I finished that film, *Amistad*, I was not the same person.

On *Blood Diamond*, you scored a second Oscar nom. Did you feel that elevated your career?
Another profound moment. At the time, even though *Amistad* had done well, and I'd been nominated for a Golden Globe, I needed to make an impression again. I obviously wanted to make sure that people didn't think that this was an accident. So, *Blood Diamond*… hopefully, people took me seriously at that point.

You're also one of those rare actors to cross over from Marvel, with *Guardians of the Galaxy*, to DC, with *Black Adam* and *Shazam!*…
That was a blessing that I didn't expect. I wasn't even sure that was possibly something you could do – appear in DC and Marvel at the same time! **JAMES MOTTRAM**

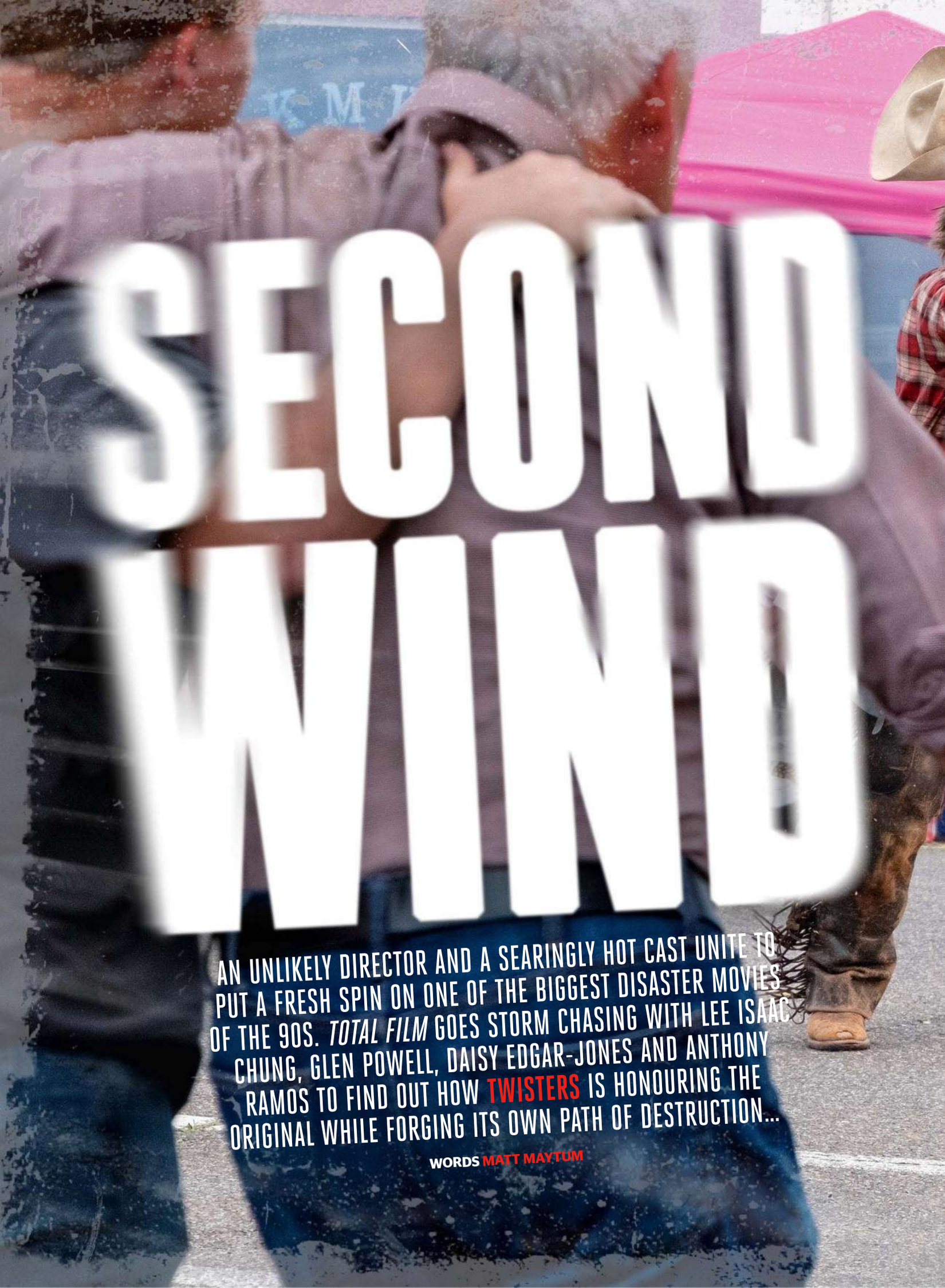
A QUIET PLACE: DAY ONE IS IN CINEMAS ON 28 JUNE.

> 'BY THE TIME I FINISHED THAT FILM, *AMISTAD*, I WAS NOT THE SAME PERSON'



(From top) *A Quiet Place: Day One*, *Rebel Moon - Part Two: The Scargiver*, *Amistad*

GETTY, ALAMY, PARAMOUNT PICTURES



SECOND WIND

AN UNLIKELY DIRECTOR AND A SEARINGLY HOT CAST UNITE TO PUT A FRESH SPIN ON ONE OF THE BIGGEST DISASTER MOVIES OF THE 90S. *TOTAL FILM* GOES STORM CHASING WITH LEE ISAAC CHUNG, GLEN POWELL, DAISY EDGAR-JONES AND ANTHONY RAMOS TO FIND OUT HOW TWISTERS IS HONOURING THE ORIGINAL WHILE FORGING ITS OWN PATH OF DESTRUCTION...

WORDS MATT MAYTUM

Growing up in the southern state of Arkansas, Lee Isaac Chung was familiar with tornadoes. 'At school, that was always the drill that we had to practise: the tornado drill,' he tells *Total Film*. One of his earliest memories is as a four-year-old, three weeks into living on the Arkansas farm in a trailer home, when his parents called out, 'There's a tornado coming.'

'We didn't have any storm shelter,' recalls Chung. 'So we were immediately looking for a place where we could hide it out.' The family were unscathed, but it made a huge impression. It also meant that the 1996 blockbuster *Twister* resonated with the young Chung when he saw it at the cinema with his dad and sister. The opening scene in particular. 'It was a family on a farm, and it's night-time, and they had to run from a tornado... It was like, "Oh, I understand this feeling."'

Filmmaker Chung is best known to date for *Minari*, the intimate, semi-autobiographical tale of a family of South Korean immigrants in 80s Arkansas. The 2020 film was Oscar-nominated in six categories (including Director and Original Screenplay for Chung, and Best Picture), and marked Chung out as a sensitive storyteller to watch. But it didn't particularly feel like a calling card for a natural-disaster blockbuster. Still, when *Twisters* – a new chapter rather than a direct sequel – spun his way, his interest was immediately piqued.

'I felt like I knew this film, and what I wanted to do in particular with it,' he says. 'I wanted to make it even more regional than the first one, because it's an area where I grew up. [*Twister* director] Jan de Bont's film is incredible, and I just felt like I could really lean in even further with the area, and what I know about that place, and the people there. It takes place in Oklahoma. I grew up right on the Oklahoma border.'

That level of specificity is just one facet of *Twisters* that separates it from the blockbuster pack this year....

CUTTING TO THE CHASE

In the summer of 96, *Twister* was also a breath (or F5-rated blast) of fresh air. An old-fashioned disaster movie powered by emerging VFX tech and modern pacing, it grossed $495m at the box office, the second biggest hit of the year (behind another disaster epic, *Independence Day)*.

It also featured a surprisingly eclectic line-up of storm-chasers, headed up by Bill Paxton and Helen Hunt as Bill and Jo. The adrenaline-fuelled crew included faces such as Philip Seymour Hoffman, Todd Field and Alan Ruck, plus Cary Elwes as a rival of Bill's who has ripped off his 'Dorothy' tech.

'One thing I loved about the original was... you almost want to start chasing storms because those characters are so fun to be around,' says Chung. 'In fact, we met so many people as we were making this movie who work in weather, and they were inspired by that original film to take up that research. So with casting this new one, I definitely wanted to find actors who I wanted to spend time with chasing weather.'

Another crucial aspect of the original for Chung was that it made scientific

'WITH CASTING THIS MOVIE, I DEFINITELY WANTED TO FIND ACTORS WHO I WANTED TO SPEND TIME WITH CHASING WEATHER'
LEE ISAAC CHUNG

Daisy Edgar-Jones, Glen Powell and director Lee Isaac Chung on location

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Glen Powell stars as fearless storm-chaser Tyler Owens

research feel like a 'grand adventure'. 'This is something that I wanted to continue with this film,' he says. 'So basically, I was going off of that original concept with this film. But at the same time, it's whole different characters, and whole different situations for their backstories. So that was completely new.'

The trio of characters in the eye of the storm this time around are Kate (Daisy Edgar-Jones), Tyler (Glen Powell) and Javi (Anthony Ramos). 'Kate Cooper is an Oklahoma native who grew up loving storms and storm chasing and meteorology,' explains *Normal People* star Edgar-Jones. 'She suffers quite a terrible loss at a young age, and I think that it kind of marks her for a lot of her later life.' When we meet her in the film, she's working in the safety of her New York weather office, until she's drawn back to Oklahoma and Tornado Alley by her friend Javi, and the development of some new tech.

Past experience of a particularly intense tornado drives Javi to realise, '"Maybe I can do something about it,"' Ramos tells *TF*. 'Javi becomes this intelligent meteorologist and scientist. He's brilliant, and he uses that experience as fuel to essentially create his own company where they can bring the fastest information to people... it's the most high-tech.

Anthony Ramos plays meteorologist Javi, who invents some new tech for tornado tracking

It's after him joining the military and coming back out, and realising, "I could actually use this technology to possibly save lives."'

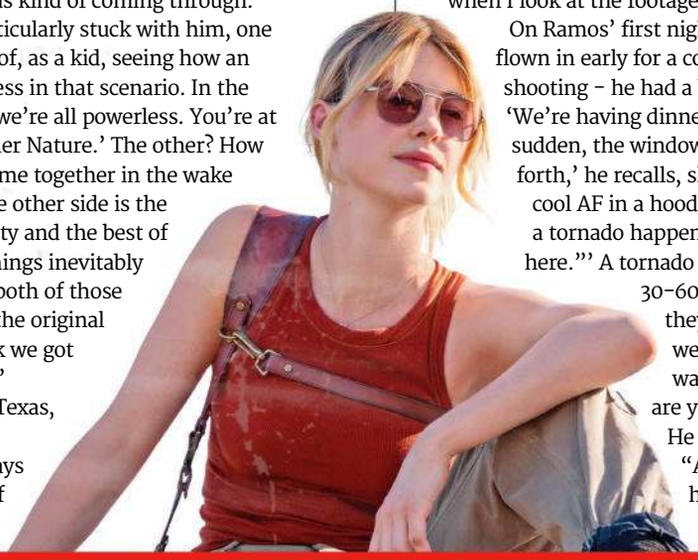
There's a deep bench of talent in the supporting cast, including Katy O'Brian, David Corenswet and Sasha Lane, but the other key protagonist here is Powell's Tyler Owens, a cocksure storm-chaser who goes by the mantra, 'You don't face your fears, you ride 'em.'

'God, what a fun character to play,' grins Powell, casually cool in a white T-shirt when he Zooms in from New York. 'He's who we all wish we could be in the face of danger. Some people run away from danger, and some people run towards it. I think it's been a metaphor of the movie that people that chase danger, they're not doing it without knowing the risks. Knowing the risks is part of what makes it thrilling, and what makes you feel alive. And that's what storm chasing is about.'

Like Chung, Texas native Powell has experience of extreme weather. 'It's actually something I got to incorporate a little bit into the movie,' he explains. 'I had an experience with this tornado in Jarrell, Texas. It was an F5 – one of the big ones. It decimated Jarrell. I was outrunning it with my aunt Taffy, and a car full of cousins. And I remember us having to take shelter. It didn't get close enough to do any damage to us, but I remember the fear of being on the road when, you know, the biggest imaginable one was kind of coming through.'

Two things particularly stuck with him, one being 'the feeling of, as a kid, seeing how an adult feels powerless in that scenario. In the face of a tornado, we're all powerless. You're at the mercy of Mother Nature.' The other? How the community came together in the wake of disaster. 'On the other side is the sense of community and the best of humanity when things inevitably go wrong. I think both of those things are within the original *Twister*, and I think we got it right in *Twisters*.'

Growing up in Texas, '*Twister* is such a seminal movie,' says Powell. 'It's sort of the monster that actually lives in your backyard, so to speak.' Brit Edgar-Jones doesn't have quite the same background. 'I think the most extreme weather we get here is "mizzle", which is miserable drizzle,' she laughs, cosy in a grey hoodie in the comfort of home in London. Although, shooting a film in Louisiana (*Where the Crawdads Sing*) gave her a taste of Mother Nature's power. 'I remember landing in Louisiana, and, on my first night, sleeping and waking up to the sound of the emergency alarm on my phone with a tornado warning. And I remember feeling like, "Oh my gosh, I am useless in this situation. I don't know what to do."' But even the Louisana weather wouldn't quite prepare Edgar-Jones for shooting on location in Oklahoma.



WEATHER WARNING

'I've got to say, actually filming this thing was so hard, because we went into Oklahoma during tornado season,' laughs Chung. 'We kept getting shut down by weather. There were so many lightning delays. We got shut down by high winds multiple times. I kept on talking to myself in front of the crew – I would say, "'Let's film in Oklahoma,' I said. 'During tornado season, I said.'" So that was kind of a running joke between all of us, that this decision I had made – that we would try to make it as practical as possible – was screwing us over. But now when I look at the footage, I wouldn't trade it.'

On Ramos' first night in Oklahoma – he'd flown in early for a costume fitting ahead of shooting – he had a brush with the weather. 'We're having dinner at night, and, all of a sudden, the windows are moving back and forth,' he recalls, slouched back in his chair, cool AF in a hoodie. 'I'm like, "Yo, is there a tornado happening right now? I just got here."' A tornado had touched down about 30-60 minutes away from where they were. 'But the winds were so heavy. I looked at the waiter, and I was like, "Yo, are you not worried about this?" He was like, "No." I was like, "All right, cool. Well, I'll have the octopus…"'

TORN' UP *Twisters* and the original *Twister* aren't the only movies to feature some serious spin cycles...

THE WIZARD OF OZ (1939)
Famously, it's a tornado that whisks Dorothy and Toto away from Kansas to the land of Oz. Special effects, er, wizard Arnold Gillespie suspended a 35ft muslin sock from a steel gantry and sprayed it with compressed air while pumping earth and dust at it.

TORNADO (1943)
You might expect a film entitled *Tornado* to feature a tornado, but it seems the title is metaphorical at first, as a tale of love, betrayal and grasping greed spins out. But then? A tornado hits the town! The twister was realised by blending special effects with footage of a real tornado in Texas.

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW (2004)
Roland Emmerich's apoco-epic features floods, hail and snow leading to a new Ice Age, but the Master of Disaster chucks in some twisters, too. They hit LA and account for 150,000 lives. For Emmerich, that's a storm in a teacup.

TAKE SHELTER (2011)
Tornadoes in a tortured mind... Michael Shannon begins to lose his sanity (or does he?) when he senses the apocalypse is coming and proceeds to dedicate all of his time and money into building a shelter. The suffocating dread starts when he dreams of a tornado forming over a field.

SHARKNADO (2013)
Livestock get caught up in a tornado – so why not sharks? Not that *Sharknado* and its sequels give a flying fin about authenticity – the sharks often steer their own trajectory, they crash to the ground at high speed and survive, and, in the second film, a Sharknado downs a plane. **JG**

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

The red Dodge pickup truck from the first film has a starring role here, too

The movie has a huge VFX component but has plenty of practical effects, too

Chung's commitment to achieving as much of the spectacle as practically as possible extended beyond the location shooting. Of course, like the original film, there's an enormous VFX component (more of which later), but on the ground it meant the cast were deluged by intense in-camera effects.

'I got hit with everything you could possibly imagine,' says Powell. 'It was day one, and all of a sudden, they fire up the fans and jet engines. There's just an entire section of the special-effects crew that's just throwing hay and dirt and water – and you're like, "Oh, this is going to be a messy movie!"' He erupts into a laugh.

'I became very good friends with the wind machines,' adds Edgar-Jones. 'You always think the wind machines will make you look cool and epic – and actually it's really hard to look in any way cool when you have a literal aeroplane jet engine shooting wind at you. It was quite a relief, given that we were filming in the height of summer in Oklahoma, to be covered in water all day long… The film, when you watch it, it feels like you're on a roller coaster, and the filming experience was much the same. I was pretty much damp the entire time.'

'They were real jet engines; I think Boeing 707 jet engines, or something like that,' says Ramos. 'They

'IT WAS REFRESHING WHEN I WATCHED THE FILM THAT THE CGI IS INCREDIBLY REALISTIC AND GENUINELY VERY SCARY'
DAISY EDGAR-JONES

brought those on set, and I was like, "Yo, this is insane." They're throwing dust in front of the fans to hit us. And then there's the rain machines.'

'And wherever they'd point that jet engine, things are flying,' continues Powell. 'And when I say "things" – I'm talking about, furniture is flying. It's not just paper, or tents. It's like real, heavy things are flying. That's the benefit of having one of the best special-effects teams in the world on this.'

Edgar-Jones conjures up a rather remarkable image of the first assistant director whipping up the mayhem on set. 'There was something majestic about the experience, because our first AD would roll the cameras, and then he would be like, "Wind!" And suddenly there's this vroom of these engines. And he's like, "Rain!" And suddenly rain is coming in. And he's like, "Debris!" And suddenly there's debris flying at you. There's something about him kind of orchestrating it that was quite magical to watch.'

Powell, whose biggest hit to date came flying in F/A-18s with Tom Cruise in *Top Gun: Maverick*, got some time behind the wheel here, too. 'I had to do pretty much all my own driving,' he smiles. 'I got to take Big Red out, and spin it around for a lot of this movie on the Oklahoma Plains.' But for all the practicality, it was still essential to get the VFX right.

BOUNDARY PUSHING

Chung champions the involvement of his VFX supervisor Ben Snow. 'We talked about actually having storm-chaser footage – actual footage of tornadoes – to inform and guide us in how we create the tornadoes on screen,' explains Chung. 'So we even hired a storm-chaser to film

The movie is a 'new chapter', following 1996's *Twister*

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

clouds and storms for us, and hopefully try to film tornadoes. A lot of that stuff has been put into the movie. There are a lot of magical clouds in this film that come from real life. I'm hoping that will blow people away.'

Of course, the tech – which was in its infancy back in 1996, *Jurassic Park* having only been released a few years earlier – has come a long way. Industrial Light & Magic worked on both *Twister* and *Twisters*, and Chung highlights the 'incredible' developments in the intervening decades. But despite the advantages, there are challenges in the present day. 'I think audiences are so used to seeing VFX that it's a lot harder to fool them on stuff, and there's a lot of YouTube footage out there since the original *Twister*,' admits Chung. 'With all this footage of tornadoes that is out there, how do we make sure that we're beating it? That was honestly a very big challenge.'

Chung's goal, then, was to 'take the audience one step further where they feel like they are completely immersed inside tornadoes, because I felt like that's a vantage point we often don't see with YouTube videos and existing footage. I wanted to make this as subjective as possible for an audience member.'

Despite the emphasis on practical effects and minimal use of soundstages, Edgar-Jones does recall taking directions for some incoming CGI. 'There were times when we were looking out the window, and Isaac was [giving instructions]. There was one where he said, "At 12 o'clock, something spooky is happening." I was like, "OK, how do I play that with my face?"' she laughs. 'So it was refreshing when I watched the film that the CGI is incredibly realistic and genuinely very scary. So I'm glad I was being scared.'

GO BIG OR GO HOME

Since the days of Spielberg and Lucas, indie directors have supersized to blockbusters. Here are five recent examples...

GARETH EDWARDS

VFX artist Edwards wowed viewers with his $500,000 sci-fi road movie *Monsters*. Edwards made the film with a crew of five people, and rustled up the otherworldly beasts on his laptop. Its success encouraged Legendary Pictures to hand him $160m for *Godzilla*. Then came *Rogue One*. And next up is *Jurassic World 4*. Only MVP IP for Edwards.

MARC WEBB

It wasn't just the surname that led Sony to Marc Webb to handle the reboot of their most precious IP with *The Amazing Spider-Man*. Webb's 2009 romcom *500 Days of Summer* brimmed with warmth and wit, just what the studio wanted for Peter Parker. And so Webb swung from a $7.5m production to one budgeted somewhere between $200-230m.

RYAN COOGLER

Costing $900,000 and clearing $17m at the worldwide box office, Coogler's hard-hitting, Sundance-winning debut *Fruitvale Station* led him and star Michael B. Jordan to first *Creed* and then *Black Panther*. The MCU juggernaut had a price tag of $200m but it cost Coogler none of his artistic integrity, bagging three Oscars and a nomination for Best Picture.

PATTY JENKINS

Grubby, grunt-y serial killer flick *Monster* grossed $64.2m on a $1.5m budget, and nabbed Charlize Theron an Oscar. Jenkins then spent years in TV and watched her *Thor* sequel fall apart before making *Wonder Woman* for Warner Bros. It cost $149m and was a soaring success, both critically and commercially ($824m), though COVID-19 lassoed her sequel's chances.

CHLOÉ ZHAO

Renowned for blurring fact and fiction on sensitive dramas such as *The Rider* and *Nomadland*, Zhao reached out to Marvel Studios, desiring to take her world-building to the next level. *The Rider* cost $80,000, *Nomadland* $5m; her MCU debut *Eternals* topped $200m and was largely viewed by critics as a flawed-but-ambitious venture. **JG**

'WEATHER HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME. IT'S SOMETHING THAT FASCINATES US ALL AND TERRIFIES US ALL'
GLEN POWELL

One day, when weather shut down production, a storm-chasing trip gave Chung and Snow first-hand experience of the winds and the changes in light and air pressure near a tornado. 'So, even now [in post-production], Ben and I still talk about that experience when we're talking about our VFX. We say, "Hey, do you remember the light changing in this way? Why don't we do that in this sequence?"'

Chung also similarly wanted to incorporate something he remembered from that childhood in Arkansas. 'Right before [a storm], there's just a shift in the air, and in the clouds, and in the rapid transformation of the sky that I always found magical. And with this movie, there is a key moment where I wanted to fill people with that sense of awe and appreciation for Mother Earth, and the way that these storms can be beautiful. It's a disaster movie and a bit of a monster movie where the tornadoes are monsters. But I want it to also feel like it's an ode to nature, and just how beautiful nature can be.'

'Weather has been around since the beginning of time,' says Powell. 'It's a great equaliser. It's something that fascinates us all and terrifies us all. I feel like this movie taps into something primal but also is escapist.'

FRAMES OF REFERENCE

The reverence felt for weather and science extends to the original *Twister*, too. 'This feels like the return of the classic disaster movie,' says Edgar-Jones, of a film in which the weather's the antagonist.

'It's based on an original film called *Twister*, but it still felt so unique to me, just because I don't see many stories like this out there, where you're really dealing with Mother Earth, and a natural phenomenon, and your adventure is rooted in reality,' adds Chung.

For Powell, what made the original *Twister* resonate, beyond it being a seminal movie growing up in Texas, is 'it kind of reminded me of watching *Jurassic Park* for the first time, or *Top Gun*, or any of these movies, where you're kind of combining the creative with technology, in a way that really, for me, encapsulates the theatrical experience.' He calls *Twister* 'revolutionary at the time', adding, 'I feel like we have that same sort of magic on ours, which is the best minds in the business putting their brains on how to give audiences a thrill ride they've never had before.'

In *Top Gun: Maverick*, Powell has starred in one of the most successful 'legacy sequels' to date, not just commercially, but in terms of retaining the spirit of a beloved property while also pushing the boundaries of what blockbuster filmmaking can do in the present day.

'I had the greatest film school ever working with Cruise and with the people that I got a chance to work with on that movie,' says Powell. 'So a lot of those lessons ended up in *Twisters* in a great way… You figure out how you can honour the original, and also make it your own.'

In terms of gauging the appropriate nostalgia level, Chung went on instinct. 'I just tried to trust my own fandom of *Twister* with it,' he explains. 'What would I want to see as a viewer if I'm seeing a reboot or a new chapter of *Twister*? I would probably be unhappy if there was no nostalgic tie-in to the original. So it was more of an intuitive thing… When we were choosing trucks, I was like, "We've got to do the Red Dodge." So I was just going with my gut on a lot of those things.'

For all its high-octane destruction, the most memorable moment from the original film is a spot of bovine bother, when a cow is swept up by in the whirlwind and flies in front of the truck's windscreen, before whooshing back in the opposite direction ('I think that was the same one…').

'That's one of the best moments in the original *Twister*, that cow moment, because that is a *movie* moment,' beams Powell. 'So, again, you want to take that feeling, and put it into this new film, but not give audiences what they're expecting, and when they're expecting it.'

'The cow moment is so iconic,' smiles Edgar-Jones. 'We have an animal of some kind, but I won't reveal what it is. Just that the cows were definitely the thing I remember most from *Twister*.'

'We've got our cow moment,' asserts Ramos. 'I don't want to blow it up. It ain't a cow, but we've got our moment with this one. I mean, there's a few moments. [The climactic sequence] is the same. I think even the first sequence of the movie is ridiculous. It's really scary

Daisy Edgar-Jones plays scientist Kate Cooper

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

The film makes a point of showing how communities come together after a natural disaster

and really jarring. It's compelling. I can't really say that there's one [standout moment]. There are multiple.'

GLOBAL MATTERS

Throughout the escalating set-pieces, Chung wanted to ensure the science of the tornadoes was accurate. 'That was very important,' he says. 'I worked a lot with Kevin Kelleher, our science advisor. He had advised on the first [movie]. What I found interesting was that tornadoes have not been figured out. There's so much to them that is mysterious. The science is constantly changing.'

And while Chung says he tries to stay away from 'messages', he does say that within the film, 'there is an acceptance of the reality that we have massive climate change right now. What our characters are doing in this movie is in no way prescriptive, but we do want to echo this hope that scientific research can possibly bring good change to what's going on globally.'

While *Minari* to *Twisters* might not have seemed an obvious segue on paper, Chung's cast have nothing but praise for their director. 'I think what makes Isaac really special is, he's an emotional filmmaker,' says Powell. 'It doesn't matter how much chaos you create, or how big the spectacle is – if you're not affecting the audience in an emotional way, none of it matters. And I think that's what Isaac did that's really special.'

'Within the film, it's an on-the-edge-of-your-seat kind of thriller, but you also have moments of real emotion and heart and character – and also really moving scenes of how communities come together after these things hit them,' says Edgar-Jones. '[Chung] also brought a lot of emotion and heart to the story as well.'

'It seemed to me, in working with him on set, it was like: we really must emphasise the relationship between these humans, and why we care about them – and, at the same time, make these storms feel as big as they've ever felt on screen,' adds Ramos.

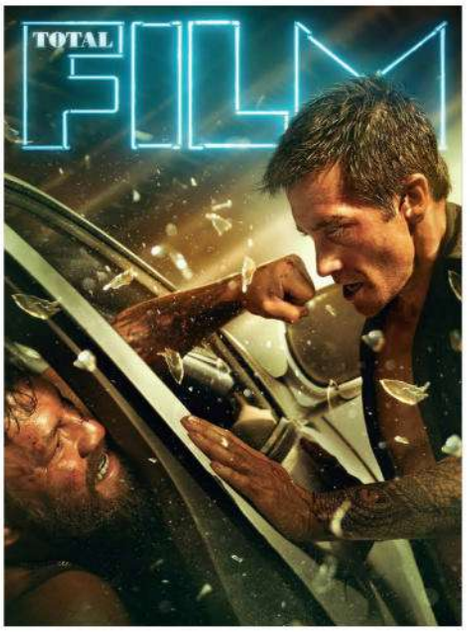
As for whether Chung sees more blockbuster-scale filmmaking in his future, he laughs when *TF* puts it to him. 'It depends on what day you're talking to me, and what project I'm pitching on the day.' But, he does add, 'I just know a lot of people will have a chance to see this thing. I do feel that I've caught the bug for making movies of a larger scale… For me, this does feel like the level at which I have always dreamed of working. I'd be so honoured and glad if I could keep doing it.'

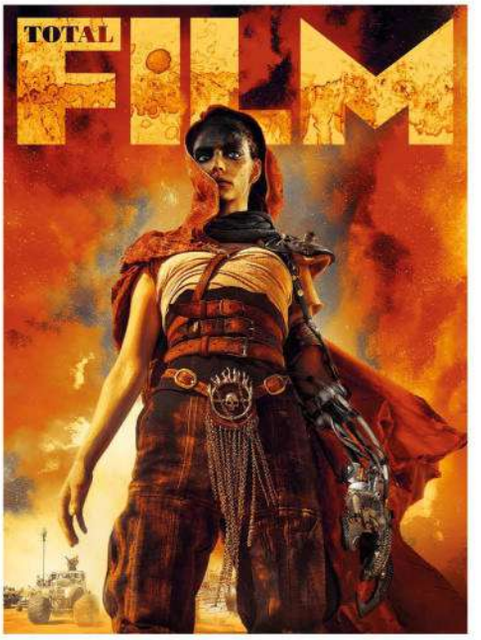
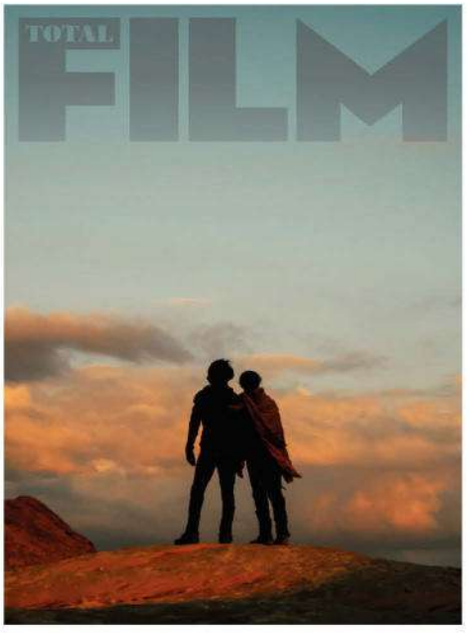
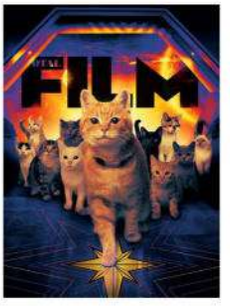
TWISTERS OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 19 JULY.

MELINDA SUE GORDON/UNIVERSAL PICTURES. WARNER BROS. PICTURES & AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT

TOTAL FILM

FREE GIFT



SUBSCRIBE TODAY

AND RECEIVE A MYSTERY GIFT

TERMS & CONDITIONS Offer closes 20 June 2024. Offer open to new UK subscribers only. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue (up to eight weeks overseas). The full subscription rate includes postage and packaging. Your gift will be delivered separately within 60 days after your first payment has cleared. Gifts only available to subscribers on the UK mainland. Gifts not available with a digital subscription and are subject to availability and may vary. In the unlikely event that we run out of this gift, we promise to offer you an alternative gift of the same value. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. For full terms and conditions, visit magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries please telephone: +44(0)330 333 1113 (open Monday-Friday, 8.30am-7pm, and Saturday, 10am-3pm UK time), or email: help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle. *Access to the digital library will end with your subscription.

EXCLUSIVE SUBSCRIBER CONTENT
DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR OR DEVICE
SUBSCRIBER-ONLY COVERS
SAVE UP TO 35% ON COVER PRICE

OUR SIMPLE SIX-MONTH SUBSCRIPTION BREAKS UP THE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION INTO TWO EASILY MANAGEABLE PAYMENTS OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR.

PRINT EDITION
WITH FREE GIFT
PLUS DIGITAL ACCESS
£22.99 EVERY SIX MONTHS
Get 13 issues of *Total Film* in print over 12 months
SAVE 35%

NEW!
Full digital access to 140+ back issues when you subscribe.*

DIGITAL EDITION
£18.49 EVERY SIX MONTHS
Get 13 issues of *Total Film* in digital form over 12 months
SAVE 35%

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AT
MAGAZINESDIRECT.COM/TOF/C99X
OR CALL 0330 333 1113 AND QUOTE C99X

ONCE MORE, WITH FEELINGS

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Total Film heads to Pixar Animation Studios to get inside the heads of the filmmaking team behind *Inside Out 2*, the sequel to one of the most acclaimed animated movies of the past decade. With new emotions, bigger locations and the onset of teenage angst to explore, this promises to be another mind-expanding, deeply felt interior adventure.

WORDS MATT MAYTUM

'It's perfectly teed up, right?!' says director Kelsey Mann of sequel *Inside Out 2*, which takes its cue from emotion Joy's final line in the 2015 original: 'After all, Riley's 12 now,' says Joy (voiced by Amy Poehler). 'What could happen?'

That's the question that Mann and his team are looking to answer in this summer's sequel, which finds Riley, aged 13, dealing with puberty, hockey try-outs and a brace of new emotions.

'Kelsey and I are both fathers of teenage girls which made exploring this stage in our children's lives really meaningful, and actually really helpful,' says producer Mark Nielsen when *Total Film* visits Pixar Animation Studios in Emeryville, California (not far from the San Francisco setting of *Inside Out*).

We're shown the first 30 minutes of the film in one of Pixar's screening rooms, and also tour the Steve Jobs Building, with its vast atrium designed for casual colleague mingling. Concept imagery decorates the walls here, giving much of the space a gallery-like feel and showcasing the absurd levels of imagination that go into a movie like this, while filmmaking team Mann and Nielsen, production designer Jason Deamer and director of photography Adam Habib talk us through the sequel.

'[Really good sequels] actually expand the world, and build upon it, and open new doors in the world that you didn't know were there,' says Mann. So join us, then, as we embark on a (literally) mind-expanding tour of Riley's innermost thoughts...

EMOTION CAPTURE

With the teenage years come unfamiliar emotions, so it was inevitable that some new characters would join Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear and Disgust. 'I wanted new emotions to show up, but I wasn't sure which ones,' says Mann. 'I made a whole list of all these options that I could do. I remember being drawn to Anxiety, and I kind of circled it, and I thought, "I think there's something here."'

Also joining the fold are Ennui, Embarrassment and Envy (Nostalgia also popped up briefly in the footage we saw). 'I knew that I wanted to deal with more complex emotions coming to Riley's console, in addition to all the emotions that we know and love with the first film,' says Mann. 'They're going to have to deal with new emotions coming upstairs to headquarters.'

EMBARRASSMENT
PAUL WALTER HAUSER

'I remember thinking, "Oh, wait, I think he should be the largest of all the emotions, because that emotion wants to not be seen, and not be noticed. And if he's the largest one, it's his worst nightmare,"' says Mann. 'Paul Walter Hauser, he's just incredible, and so funny,' adds Nielsen. 'But it was a bit of a tough sell. Because when you describe it or see it on paper, it doesn't look like it's much of a role, because he doesn't talk! We had about a three-and-a-half-hour session with Paul Walter Hauser doing nothing but vocalisations. No actual lines.'

ANXIETY
MAYA HAWKE

'We do [the voice casting] blind where we don't know who the actors are,' says Nielsen. 'And, man, the second we heard Maya, and it was clips properly pulled from *Stranger Things* and some other things she'd done – she's got this amazing ability to talk really, really fast, and say a thousand words in three seconds. And there's just a nervous energy to it that we picked up on in some of her clips, and we were like, "She could be brilliant at this."'

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

'I knew I wanted to add new emotions, and a lot of the emotions are based off of a basic shape and a basic colour,' says Mann. 'And I knew I wanted a really small one and a really big one.' When it comes to designing the personified emotions, it starts even more simply than you might expect, before the look of the characters are finessed. 'I just philosophically believe that it's a good approach to character design to think at a fundamental level, graphically, about both the basic shape language and the basic colour, and then layer from there,' explains production designer Jason Deamer. 'You get the foundation work in before you build the stuff on top.'

It follows the principles established in the first film, in which Riley's emotions were inspired by the primary colours from a kid's toy-box. 'Unfortunately, we had too many characters and not enough primary colours, but I think we figured it out,' laughs Deamer.

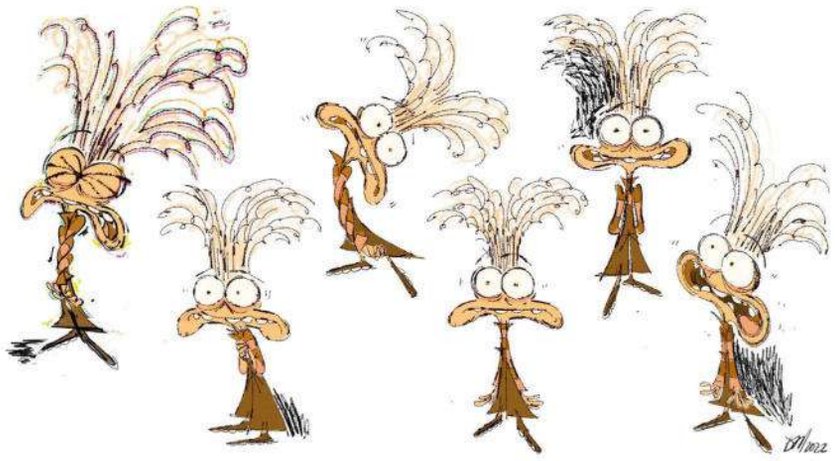
SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

ENNUI
ADÈLE EXARCHOPOULOS

'We love the idea – because they're more complex emotions – of having one be multilingual,' says Nielsen. 'And because it's a French word, we're like: "What if she could speak English and French?" And so we found the incredible Adèle Exarchopoulos to do the voice because she's got a very deep register, and it just fits so well with the emotion that comes out of that character.' But, adds Mann, 'I also wanted somebody who was not putting on the accent, but who was really doing it for real.'

ENVY
AYO EDEBIRI

'Envy is one of my favourite new characters,' explains Mann. 'It took a lot of development to get Envy. In fact, we even had Jealousy in the movie. I almost had them be twins, so that no one could ever tell the difference between the two of them. But envy is the feeling that you wish you have what others have. Envy, we were like, "She should be the smallest one! Because she wishes she was as tall as everyone else. She wishes she could reach the console like everybody else can."'



CHARACTER BUILDING

In *Inside Out 2*, Anxiety will have one of the biggest impacts on the newly teenage Riley. When designing these characters, though, Deamer wanted to push the boat out and make the new characters more... Muppet-y. 'We're making animation, so why be bound?' he muses. 'I always thought that Anger and Fear of the first cast lived, the most, up to the promise of the exaggerated "anatomical choices". They're the most pushed away from human shapes. They're the ones that were the most successful to me. And I wanted to do that here. I pushed really hard to do so – I mean, within limits. We need eyes. We need eyebrows. We need mouths for dialogue. And hands...'

DOG DAYS

A visit to a vault of Riley's secrets introduces a few fresh faces, such as Bloofy, the 2D-animated dog who fronts a pre-school show that Riley still enjoys. These characters require a different animation style.

'It's an older technique, you would think,' says Deamer. 'But we have to insert that into a three-dimensional environment. Do you project it onto a card that cuts out, so that it's actually a card that's walking around? Do we do it in post?

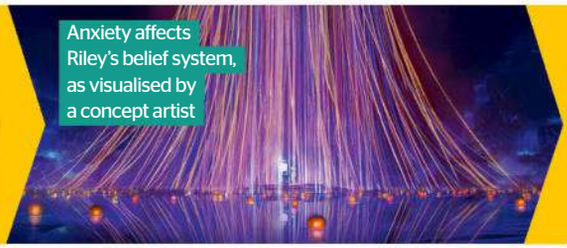
'You can't go too 2D. If it's 100% flat, it'll stick out like a sore thumb. So we had a lot of talk about, "How much light attenuation going across the surface do we do? Does he cast a shadow on the floor? Is the shadow two-dimensionally rendered?"'

CONSOLE UPGRADE

When the puberty alarm sounds, it's demolition day at the emotions' HQ, and the jellybean-shaped mind workers roll in to rip up the living area, replacing the console with a newer, bigger, more sensitive piece of kit for Joy et al. to work with. After concept drawings (like the one pictured here) come animated storyboards. The whole film is created in a roughly animated 2D style before the 3D animation begins, and then the layout team begins spacing out the environment.

'If you look at the [story]boards... that's a flat drawing,' says layout lead Ryan Heuett. 'But when we get to the 3D environment there's so much depth in that set, so artist Mike Leonard started doing all these cool vignettes to show that HQ was under construction.' A 'camera' was also added with a dolly shot going from left to right, so 'you can see all these little vignettes and you can also see how much depth is in that set... It really took on a whole new life from storyboards.'

A storyboard artist sketches out key story beats and camera angles



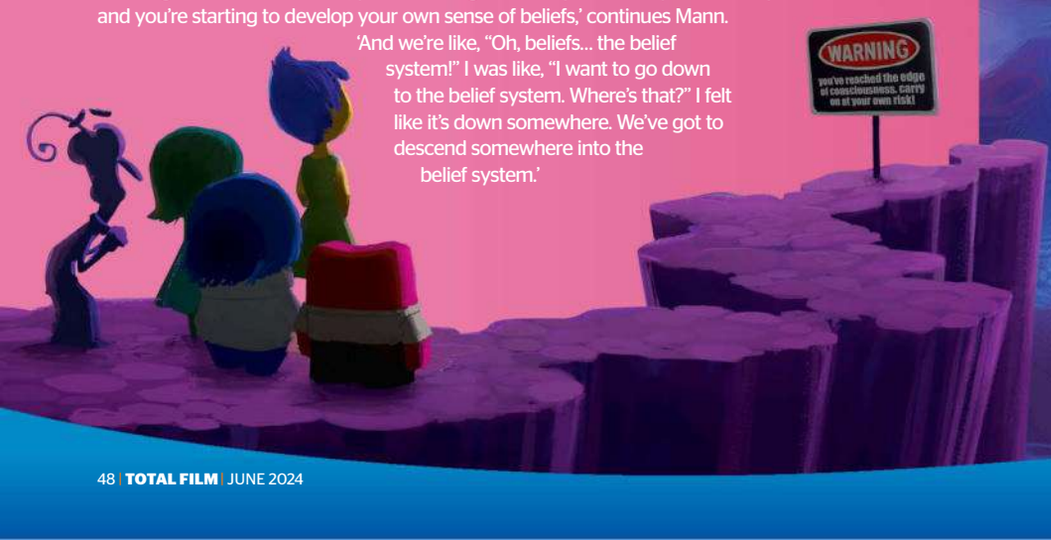
Anxiety affects Riley's belief system, as visualised by a concept artist

A virtual camera helps to establish the placement of characters and props

MIND TRIP

Among the areas of the mind explored this time will be Riley's belief system – a vast, dark, watery environment, with long, tendril-like strings that connect forming beliefs up to the HQ. 'The *Inside Out* world is a cool world to play in, because you can take something we can all relate to but have never seen before, like memories,' says Mann. '[The team on the first film] figured out a visual language for how they work, and what they look like. I wanted to expand that out into something new.'

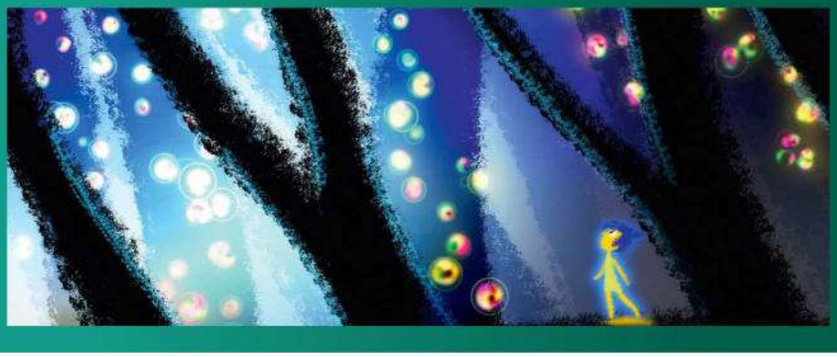
The belief system was a natural extension of the story. 'We thought about Riley being a teenager, and a lot of that is, you're starting to develop into who you are as a person, and you're starting to develop your own sense of beliefs,' continues Mann. 'And we're like, "Oh, beliefs... the belief system!" I was like, "I want to go down to the belief system. Where's that?" I felt like it's down somewhere. We've got to descend somewhere into the belief system.'



SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

STRINGS ATTACHED

Those strings emit a core belief when plucked, like a musical instrument. 'I'm a big believer in trying to come up with novel things. I want it. I think the people working on it want to work on something they haven't done before. And I think audiences want to see something different,' says Deamer. 'That was one of those thematic things that came and went. It wasn't always a belief system. At one point, it was these neuron-like trees. They were on a boat at one point. But I always had this idea that I wanted to do that visual thing, so I kept repurposing it.' The vibrations of the strings were inspired by close-up, slo-mo videos of guitars, and the structure of the belief system was designed to be harp-like. 'It's a nice... I don't know if it's a visual reference, but it's a sound reference to use as a visual reference.'



STRAIGHT SHOOTING

The 'camera' department is one of the first to get going when pre-production starts on a Pixar movie. Director of Photography Habib comes from a live-action background, and applies some of those cinematography techniques to animation. In *Inside Out 2*, the human world and mind world have contrasting camera language. The former is physical and imperfect, while the latter is virtual with mechanical camera moves.

'One of the things that's really exciting about the film is that we now have this widescreen canvas,' says Habib, referring to the fact that *Inside Out 2* has been shot in the wider 2.39:1 aspect ratio, as opposed to the original film's 1.85:1. 'The whole idea that we had in the first film was that the human-world camera, which is Riley's story, would have a lot more tactile imperfection and a physical quality to it – and the mind-world camera, Joy's world, is almost like a virtual camera. With the new widescreen format of *Inside Out 2*, we took that a little bit further by making the human world camera an anamorphic lens. So it's just a little more textured, a little more detailed.'

Alternate shots are explored during the staging phase

The animators adjust the character models to find the performance

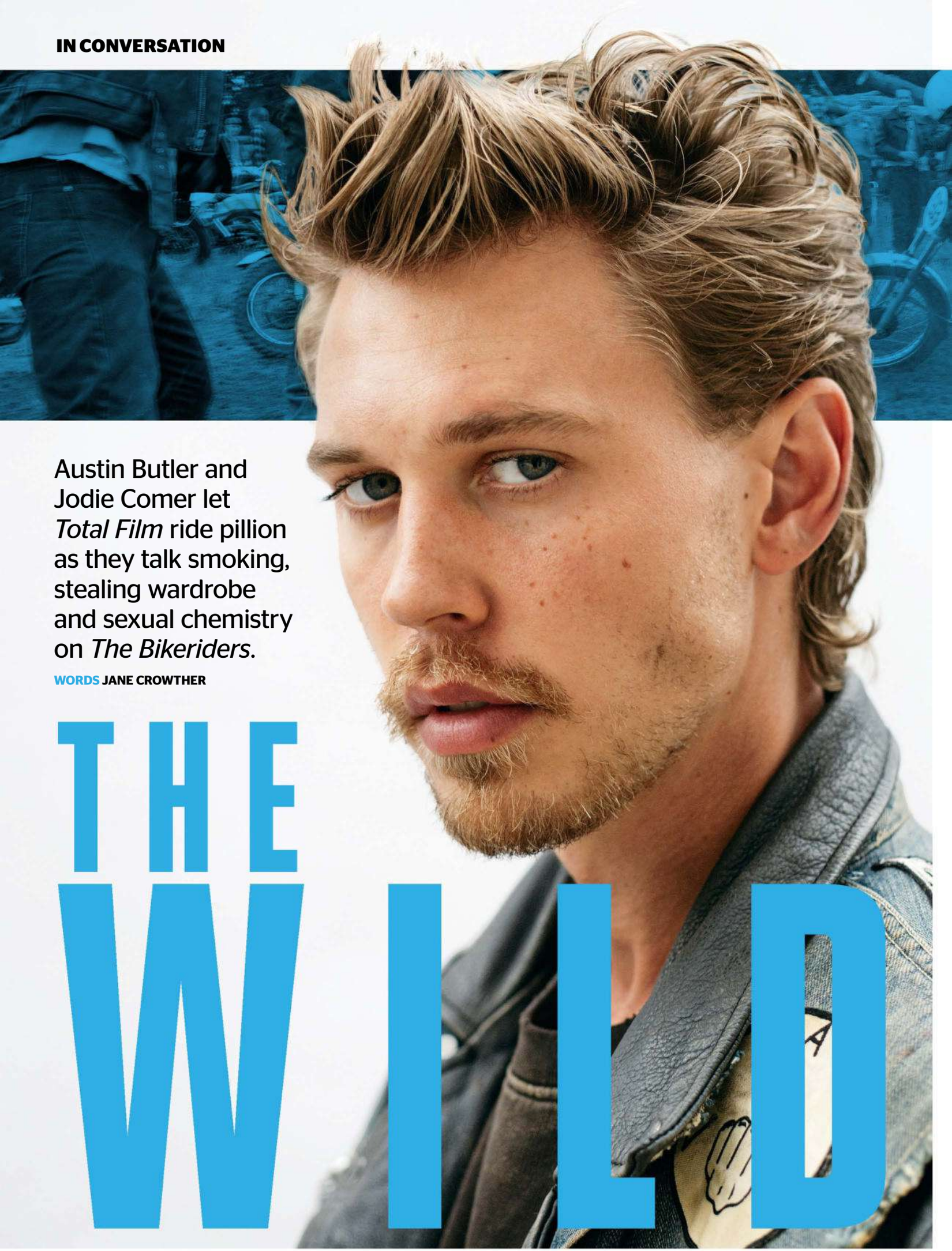
Lighting experts help to harmonise characters, objects and environments

EMOTIONAL IMPACT

'The inspiration for what Riley is going through comes from a personal place for me,' admits Mann, who was digitising old family photos when he realised that he looked a lot less happy on his birthdays as he hit his teenage years. 'It just felt like it was the right time to tell a great story about a difficult time in a lot of our lives.' There were also ideas that didn't make the finished film that could be picked up for another instalment, which the *Inside Out 2* team did with certain elements left over from the first film. 'There's stuff that I'm like, "That's a good idea, and that's really funny. It needs to be seen at some point,"' says Mann. 'There are both characters and sets that landed on the cutting room floor that deserve to live and see another day,' adds Nielsen.

INSIDE OUT 2 OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 14 JUNE.

DISNEY/PIXAR



Austin Butler and Jodie Comer let *Total Film* ride pillion as they talk smoking, stealing wardrobe and sexual chemistry on *The Bikeriders*.

WORDS **JANE CROWTHER**

THE WILD

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

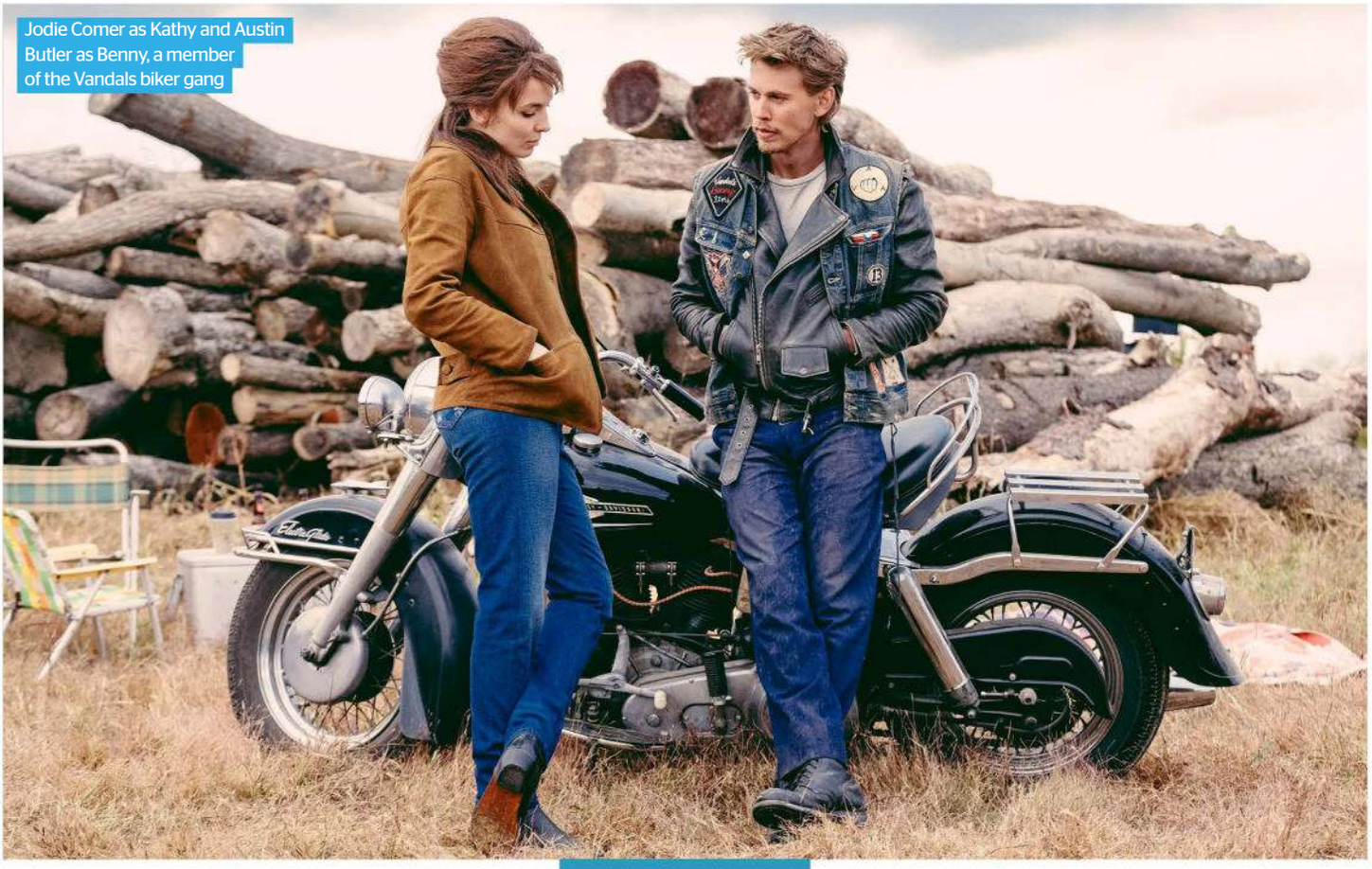
ONES

There's a moment in Jeff Nichols' 60s-set hymn to open roads, purring carburettors and bad boys in leather jackets where Jodie Comer's Kathy reluctantly gets on the back of a gleaming Harley belonging to Austin Butler's wildcard biker Benny. As she clings to his denim jacket and he guns the hog over the rise of a highway bridge at midnight, his gang appears behind them, headlamps twinkling, engines roaring, while The Shangri-Las duskily sing, 'Out in the street'... It's an image and feeling seemingly transposed directly from the pages of Danny Lyon's seminal photobook, *The Bikeriders* – a tome Nichols discovered on the floor of his brother's bedroom as a teen and has been hankering to make into a film ever since.

'It was the most complete view of a subculture I'd ever seen,' he told *Total Film* in October last year. 'It honestly felt like ingredients or instructions to go and make a movie.'

It's also a scene that marks the liminal moment Kathy – and audiences – buy into the inherent coolness of bikers and the seductive lure of Benny, a man she'll fight to keep when gang leader Johnny (Tom Hardy) exerts his own pull on him.

Audiences in Telluride, where the film premiered last year, were certainly along for the ride as reviews praised the consolidation of Comer and Butler as bona fide movie stars – her flexing an awards-worthy idiolectic Chicago accent and him smoking, literally and figuratively. Unable to promote the film at the time due to strikes, both actors arrive in New York City at the end of April to beat the drum for a movie that has now moved distributor and release date. They sit down with *Total Film* to unpick the timeless attraction of on-screen bikers that has fascinated movie fans since Marlon Brando popped on the leathers...



Jodie Comer as Kathy and Austin Butler as Benny, a member of the Vandals biker gang

Austin, you actively went after this role post-*Elvis*. And Jodie, Jeff Nichols said he felt you would take care of Kathy. What drew you both to the project?

Austin Butler: For one, I was a fan of Jeff's beforehand, all the way back to *Shotgun Stories* and *Take Shelter* and *Midnight Special*. And then reading the script, and that feeling of nostalgia that I got of movies of the 60s – I hadn't read a script like it. And just knowing the Americana feeling that comes out of Jeff's films so clearly. So, I was really excited by it, and by Benny – and the enigma and the mystery that he is.

Jodie Comer: I just fell in love with Kathy. I felt like I understood her and there was something about her, the way in which she carried herself, that I felt I had witnessed in many women in my life. Especially like when I think of northern older women – this kind of essence, this energy. I just thought of my nan. She felt very bold to me. She wasn't concerned with the way that she looked or what people thought. When we meet those types of people in our own lives, we're so enamoured by them. And I loved that she could see these guys for what they were; she was quite unimpressed with a lot of their behaviour and their lack of ability to communicate with each other, their carelessness. So for me, she felt like the most reliable narrator. That feels refreshing when you have a woman like her telling a story like this. And when I heard the audio of her… wow.

'I WAS REALLY EXCITED BY THE ENIGMA AND MYSTERY THAT BENNY IS'

AUSTIN BUTLER

Austin, you didn't have audio of Benny to go off. So how did you find him?

AB: Yeah, and the pictures [in Danny Lyon's book] don't show his face. So a lot of his history became the thing that I felt was important for me to figure out, for myself at least. And so without having a lot of information on him, it was a lot of me figuring out what his childhood would have been like and what makes a man like this? And then just immersing myself in bike culture. We had the amazing Jeff Milburn [stunt coordinator] who lives and breathes motorcycles. So he became the guy that I just would ride with every day and meet his friends and be around people who have motorcycle culture running through their veins. That helped me to get in that headspace.

You went straight from *Dune* 2 to this project – how was the adjustment from playing a sci-fi psychopath to a 60s biker?

AB: I was overwhelmed at first at the idea of not having much time between the two projects. I like having months of being able to slowly let things marinate. It meant that I had to front-load the preparation so I could prepare both films in unison, then I could go off and film *Dune* and immerse myself in that world. I had a few weeks off in the middle of filming *Dune* and I flew back and did motorcycle training. Then I went back and finished *Dune* and then I flew straight from Budapest to Cincinnati.

The movie was inspired by Danny Lyon's 1967 photobook of the same name about Chicago bikers

BRYAN SCHUTMAAT, KYLE KAPLAN, FOCUS FEATURES, UNIVERSAL

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

It wouldn't have been my ideal way but it turned out to be an incredible experience because of the team that I was around. I went from being immersed in Denis' [Villeneuve] world and then coming to Cincinnati and getting to be with Jeff and his longtime collaborator and cinematographer Adam Stone, and the whole family that he has, and that allowed me to shift headspace a lot faster.

Jodie, Kathy's accent is incredibly specific and you're known for your accents. Was this a juicy one to get into?

JC: Oh yeah! It felt like a character in itself, in a way. The voice. When I started working with my dialect coach, Victoria [Hanlin], she said, 'Look, she's from Chicago. But within one sentence all of her vowel sounds are contradicting each other, so do you want to do a generic Chicago or do you want to do the audio?' And I'm like, 'I want to do the audio!' On the audio she's larger than life without even trying, and she has very specific stresses on words and inflections and you can feel the chaos that surrounds her when you listen – she's mid-sentence and then she's shouting at the kids and she's lighting a cigarette. So it was about trying to get all of those beautiful moments captured. And then working on it so much that when you get to set you can think about it a little less.

AB: It was such an impressive feat! I had heard the Kathy tapes, and then Jeff one day played me a voice memo that I thought was the real Kathy. And then he said, 'No, that's actually Jodie.' And it blew me away.

Had either of you ridden a bike before this?

AB: Yeah, I had; my dad was a motorcycle guy and when I was 15 or something he took me into a parking lot and taught me how to ride. So I'd been on motorcycles, but nothing like these Harleys that we were on that are from the 60s. They don't want to stop and they're much heavier than a lot of the modern bikes that I've been on before. And that was a fun thing to get to learn, just really getting time in the saddle.

JC: You know, whenever I got on [a bike], we had to be on a safety vehicle. Precious cargo, precious cargo! The guys were always riding free and helmets off. But when we did the sequence where Benny and Kathy meet for the first time and we were riding over the bridge with all the guys on the motorcycles… hearing the roar of the bike engines for the first time – it was so magical. So a lot of what I was feeling in that moment felt exactly how Kathy must have felt, being swept up into this dangerous, mysterious, sexy world, which was so far from what she was used to. But no, I still haven't ridden a motorcycle. I was OK not going to bike school!

Director Jeff Nichols with Comer and Butler on set

'I STILL HAVEN'T RIDDEN A MOTORCYCLE. I WAS OK NOT GOING TO BIKE SCHOOL!'

JODIE COMER

Comer perfected a Chicago accent to play Kathy, who also acts as the film's narrator

Kathy falls for Benny and the countercultural lifestyle he represents

Jodie, you arrived after the pack bonding – was that a similar dynamic to the one between the Vandals and Kathy?

JC: I think so. I just finished *The End We Start From* the week before I flew in and I remember getting there on that first week and we were on night shoots. It was the scene where we're all around the campfire and Norman Reedus has a big moment for his character. And Michael Shannon did this huge monologue… and I remember just being surrounded by all these actors thinking, 'Oh, wow'. Each choice they're making is so distinct and rich. So it was nice for me to spend that first week kind of observing.

What was it like working with Tom Hardy – the third wheel in this love triangle?

AB: Tom has been a hero of mine for a long time and the quality of work that he's consistently put in over the years is really staggering. I was struck by how kind and how fun he was; he's such an amazing storyteller. I feel like I lucked out that the first time I meet him and get

The film depicts the lives of a fictional Midwestern biker gang in the 1960s

to work with him is as a character that is like a brother to him. That meant we got to bond quickly for the sake of our characters, so he and I really spent a lot of time together and just told stories and talked about life. As an actor it's really impressive to watch how he has such a grasp of the craft that he doesn't have to stay in that intense place all day. It's pretty amazing to watch him in an instant be able to snap into whatever the scene demands. I learned a lot from that.

Festival audiences felt there was a sexual charge between Johnny and Benny – particularly in a scene where Johnny leans in close to Benny. Was that intentional?

AB: Initially Jeff planned that the entire scene was going to be Johnny being maybe six feet away from Benny during that conversation, and Tom had the idea of getting very close and that's the intensity that you feel in that moment. When somebody gets in your space in that way, you don't know if they're going to head-butt you or what is going to happen. So the charge, the energy that you feel, is really singular, and Tom's a powerful actor. It felt exhilarating. But I was coming at it from the headspace of Benny – it feels like he's a mustang on the prairie that everybody's trying to tame. Everybody's trying to somehow put a saddle on him and keep him in one place but he's too wild for that. So that's the perspective that I was having in that moment.

JC: This kind of triangle of love was always spoken about, but it wasn't until I watched the film that I really saw it. But it wasn't something I was thinking about during shooting because I was like, 'I don't really give a fuck what Johnny's doing.' That was my headspace as Kathy. But yeah, it's beautiful.

'BENNY IS LIKE A MUSTANG ON THE PRAIRIE THAT EVERYONE IS TRYING TO TAME'

AUSTIN BUTLER

All the costumes are cool – did you steal any of them?

JC: I've got a little gold chain of Kathy's which she wore. And we made a specific blush colour. My make-up artist made this kind of orangey blush and I took a little pot of that home, a little memorabilia. I don't use it, but I like having it.

AB: Yeah, I actually have a lot; the leather jacket, the jean vest that goes over the jacket, Benny's rings, the white pants. I haven't worn the jacket around town, but I've definitely worn the rings.

The gang's world becomes ever more dangerous and violent

Tom Hardy plays gang leader Johnny

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

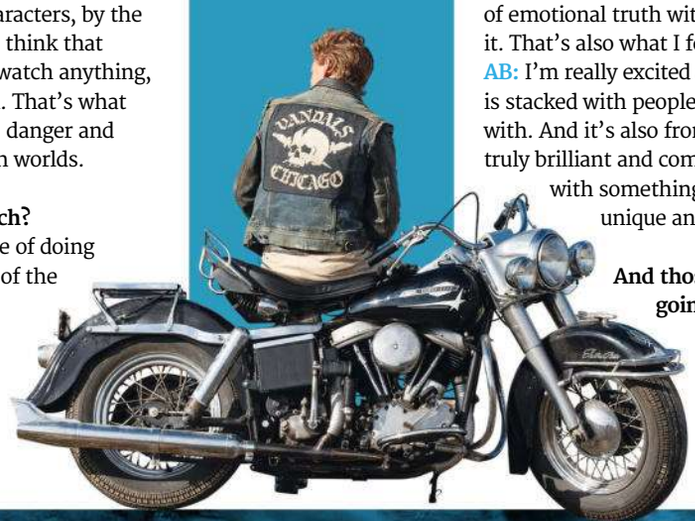
The film sees Kathy attempt to steer Benny away from the gang's criminal activities

Let's talk about the smoking in this film. It's a lot…
AB: It's crazy, and on this one I decided to smoke real cigarettes so yeah, that was a lot of smokin'! One actor had quit smoking before that and so he's having to be around just the worst environment for somebody who had recently quit [laughs]. The film should have a health warning.

There's talk of awards around this film – does that help a non-franchise film reach audiences?
JC: Maybe. If things are being mentioned in that sense, then they're in people's minds. But ultimately it's about the audience response, and what I've always loved about Jeff and why I wanted to work with him so much was that his films are so cinematically beautiful, stunning, and at the heart of it, so driven by the characters, by the emotion. He has so much integrity. And I think that sensitivity is what I connect with when I watch anything, whether it be theatre or film or television. That's what people want to feel. This film has scope – danger and action and sensitivity. It's the best of both worlds.

Why do we love cinematic bikers so much?
AB: It's just a sense of freedom. The sense of doing something that is dangerous, that is part of the counterculture. There's something sexy about that. It's this sort of wild animal nature of freedom, for me at least.
JC: I feel like subcultures then felt so much more palpable and ingrained. It was pre [modern] technology, pre all these distractions. This is where people found their identity and their community. I feel like there is definitely this element of nostalgia and a craving for a lost time.

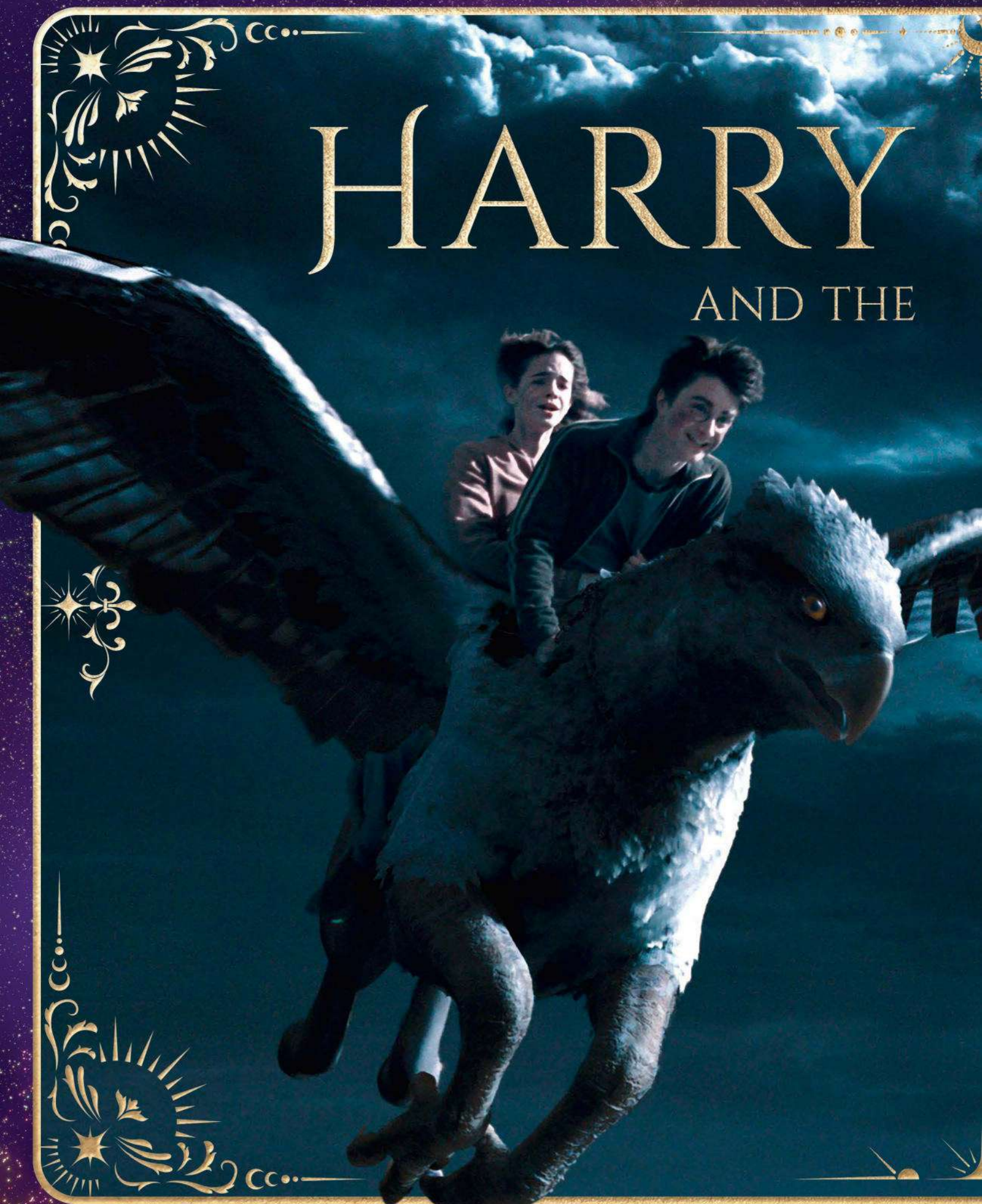
'THIS IS WHERE PEOPLE FOUND THEIR IDENTITY AND THEIR COMMUNITY'
JODIE COMER



You've both got big projects coming up with *28 Years Later* and *Eddington*. What can you tell us about them?
JC: I'm terrified to say anything! But I'm so incredibly excited to work with Danny Boyle and Alex Garland. And having met Danny, he's incredibly sure and confident and innovative. As an actor to be on a set with someone like that who's leading the charge is so exciting. I remember seeing *28 Days Later* and I was so struck with how it was so rooted in reality, and it was more about the exploration of us as a species and our behaviour and how we react. It felt like there was a lot of emotional truth within the film that really anchored it. That's also what I felt when I read this script.
AB: I'm really excited about *Eddington*. I mean, the cast is stacked with people I've always dreamed of working with. And it's also from the mind of Ari Aster, who is truly brilliant and completely singular. He's come up with something here that I think is really, really unique and exciting.

And those *Heat 2* rumours aren't going away…
AB: [Laughs] Yeah, I… I mean, I love the first film, but no comment on that.

THE BIKERIDERS OPENS IN CINEMAS ON 21 JUNE.



SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

POTTER PRISONER OF AZKABAN at 20

As the film widely regarded as the best Harry Potter movie hits its two-decade anniversary, *Total Film* chats to visionary director Alfonso Cuarón and franchise producer David Heyman about rolling the dice to take the series in a deeper, darker direction...

WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM

'I was not very aware of Potter's universe and I was surprised to be offered it, coming from *Y tu mamá también*,' recalls director Alfonso Cuarón, who's talking to *Total Film* 20 years on from the release of his one and only dip into J.K. Rowling's Wizarding World, with *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. The third movie in the Potter franchise, it was, at the time, by some distance the best in the series – and the critical consensus did not alter once the dust settled on the five movies that followed.

'I was confused because it was completely not on my radar,' Cuarón continues. 'I speak often with Guillermo [del Toro], and a couple of days after, I said, "You know, they offered me this Harry Potter film, but it's really weird they offer me this." He said, "Wait, wait, wait, you said you haven't read Harry Potter?" I said, "I don't think it's for me." In very florid lexicon, in Spanish, he said, "You are an arrogant asshole."'

'I'd seen *Y tu mamá también*, which I loved, and I oddly thought he'd be the perfect director for the third Potter,' remembers David Heyman, who in 1999 bought the rights to Rowling's first four novels and went on to produce all eight Potter movies and the three Fantastic Beasts prequels that came after. He grins into the Zoom camera. 'That's not what some might think. Can you imagine what some thought Harry, Ron and Hermione would get up to, having seen *Y tu mamá también*?' It's a fair point – Cuarón's Mexican road movie about two 17-year-old guys and a 28-year-old woman enjoying uninhibited sex was full of action, and we don't mean quidditch. '*Y tu mamá* was about the last moments of being a teenager, and *Azkaban* was about the first moments of being a teenager,' Heyman notes. 'I felt he could make the show feel, in a way, more contemporary. And just bring his cinematic wizardry.'

Now, with *Children of Men* and *Gravity* on his CV, Cuarón seems like a more obvious choice than he did in the early noughties. Back then, the director had made only Mexican romcom *Sólo con tu pareja*, *A Little Princess* (which both Heyman and Rowling adored), *Great Expectations* starring Ethan Hawke, and *Y tu mamá también*, meaning he was untested on a film of *Azkaban*'s scale. Surely Warner Bros. wouldn't entrust their golden goose to Cuarón? The first two movies, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, had together rung up almost $1.9bn at the worldwide box office – the kind of prize you'd employ three-headed dog Fluffy to protect. That there was to be a change at all was only because Chris Columbus (*Home Alone*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*) wished to spend more time with his family. He would stay on as a producer, but had chosen to vacate the director's chair.

Heyman, leaning on Rowling's support for Cuarón, flew to LA to meet with Alan F. Horn, President and COO of Warner Bros. Due diligence meant that there were several names under discussion – del Toro, Marc Forster, Callie Khouri, M. Night Shyamalan and Kenneth Branagh, fresh from playing charismatic charlatan Gilderoy Lockhart in *Chamber of Secrets*, were all reportedly in the sorting hat – but it was Cuarón whose name was plucked out and announced to the world in July 2002. The franchise 'needed to grow with the books', stressed Heyman, and *Prisoner of Azkaban* represented the pivotal moment when Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Hermione (Emma Watson) and Ron (Rupert Grint) were to undergo their most terrifying encounter yet: puberty.

TEENAGE KICKS

Prisoner of Azkaban is the last of the Potter books that can be described as lean, but is, nonetheless, a complex, densely plotted affair. Adapted by returning scribe Steve Kloves, the script details Harry attending Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry for his third year, only to find the beloved institution shrouded in fear. Circling the dark skies above Hogwarts are the Dementors, wraith-like creatures normally found guarding the fortress of Azkaban in the middle of the North Sea, where the worst criminals in the Wizarding World are detained. These cold, callous creatures now haunt Hogwarts because convicted murderer Sirius Black (Gary Oldman) has escaped from Azkaban. Black, it is whispered, was the most devoted follower of Voldemort, and is now intent on killing Harry to avenge the Dark Lord.

But the plot, full of twists and turns and incorporating new Defence Against the Dark Arts instructor Professor Remus Lupin (David Thewlis), is only a part of it. Also in play are the secrets of Harry's past as the series begins to properly dig into just what it is that makes him who he is – the famed only survivor of an attack by Voldemort. And then there's a host of terrific set-pieces, new magical creatures, a clockwork-precise time-travel element, and, crucially, these now-teenage kids beginning to struggle with not just their hormones but their very identities.

'The first two Potters deal with children's experience,' reflects Cuarón. 'Characters who are 11 and 12. Innocence. A purity even in the way they see the danger. We were dealing with the first sting of questioning everything, particularly who you are. Suddenly you are not part of the whole; there is a teenage separation.'

Stars Emma Watson, Daniel Radcliffe and Rupert Grint

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

New cast members such as David Thewlis and Gary Oldman added a darker energy

'Azkaban was about the first moments of being a teenager'

David Heyman

The director came to the production – the first to swell from a year-long time frame to 18 months, necessitated by the deepening and darkening of the books – with plenty of tricks up his sleeve. For starters, he sought to capture naturalistic performances from the young cast, who were now of an age where they could wrestle with their characters' motivations and emotions rather than simply recite the lines.

'Chris [Columbus] would help them with intonation and get them excited; Alfonso was treating them as young adults: what are you feeling?' explains Heyman. 'Alfonso also had the three kids write essays about their characters. Dan wrote a page, Emma wrote 10 or 12, and Rupert didn't give in anything. Just perfect.'

'They were becoming more aware of the craft of acting and they wanted to go to the next stage,' says Cuarón, who was satisfied that they understood their characters given how perfectly the effort they put into their essays chimed with their on-screen personalities. 'From the get-go we talked about how we wanted to ground everything, to make it about a normal human experience in this world. [We wanted to explore] the internal life of each one of these characters. They were incredibly intuitive about this, and very receptive.'

Another trick Cuarón employed was to bring in costume designer Jany Temime and together work on ensuring that each teen wore their school uniform to express their individuality. In the first two movies, the uniforms were, well, uniform, worn as a child would present themselves on the first day of school. In *Azkaban*, shirts are untucked, ties loosely knotted and sleeves rolled, while any time spent outside of lessons sees the kids ditch their uniforms for civvies.

'Every robe was a slightly less bright red; it was a more muted red,' nods Heyman. 'The ties were less vivid, a little more purply red. Alfonso wanted Dumbledore's robes to be more fluid, not as stiff and formal as [those worn by] Richard Harris. A little less statesman-like. A little more eccentric.'

Harris, sadly, had passed away when *Chamber of Secrets* was in post-production, with the role of Professor Albus Dumbledore inherited by Michael Gambon. Cuarón envisaged the headmaster as more of an 'old hippie', as Temime put it, his robes of

The Prisoner of Azkaban saw Hermione, Harry and Ron explore their places in the world

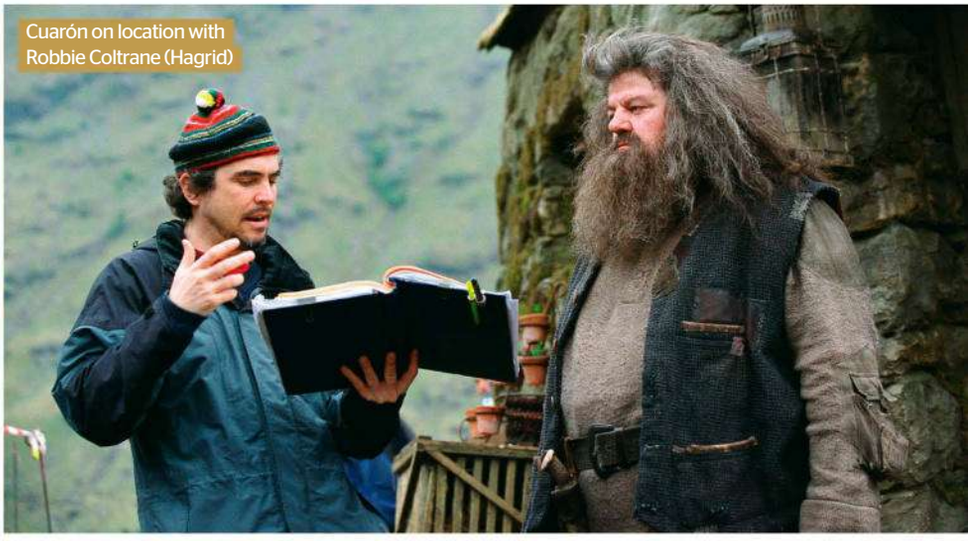
tie-dyed silk flowing behind him. Professor Lupin, meanwhile, wore unkempt tweeds, with Cuarón desiring that Thewlis exhibit the air of 'an uncle who parties hard on the weekends'. That Cuarón should introduce Thewlis and Oldman to the established adult cast that included Maggie Smith (Professor McGonagall), Alan Rickman (Severus Snape) and Robbie Coltrane (Hagrid) was no coincidence, again evidencing his desire to freshen the franchise. 'It was a different culture of acting,' says Heyman. 'Not people who are sirs and lords and ladies.'

Also key was Cuarón's decision to introduce location work to what had largely been a studio-bound franchise. Certainly, much of the 2003 shoot, which ran from 24 February to late November, was conducted at Leavesden Studios in Hertfordshire, but the joyously crazed Knight Bus sequence was shot in Palmers Green and other areas of London, while Scottish locations provided the film's natural scenery. As for the exhilarating scene in which Harry rides hippogriff Buckbeak, a visit to Virginia Water Lake in Surrey will have you scanning the sky for a swooping winged beast.

But perhaps the most important change wrought by Cuarón was to introduce a more cinematic style, as he determined to explore Hogwarts' grounds. 'I can't do anything unless I have the freedom to do what I do,' says the director whose earlier films had established his fondness for fluid camera movement. 'I wanted to stretch things. Open up the universe. To feel that Hogwarts is set in a geographical place, where you can have nature around your universe, and to make your universe one with that nature. And to create a geographic logic to Hogwarts. You know, the Great Hall is here, and then the stairs are next to the Great Hall, and if you take the stairs you go to the bedrooms…

'I WANTED TO STRETCH THINGS. OPEN UP THE UNIVERSE'

ALFONSO CUARÓN



Cuarón on location with Robbie Coltrane (Hagrid)

If you go to the Clock Tower, the hospital is a corridor away, and you can see the courtyard, and from there you see the bridge… and below that is Hagrid's hut, and the Whomping Willow on the other side, then the forest…'

Incoming DoP Michael Seresin introduced a patina of silver and shadow to reflect the darkening emotions, and shot much of the action with wide-angled lenses to enable Cuarón to incorporate the characters' body language, and to locate them in relation to Hogwarts. Columbus had favoured close-ups, but Cuarón insists the evolution of style was for a concrete reason: 'A child doesn't have a sense of orientation. Places are places.'

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

The third film pushed the boundaries on creepy sequences

SCARE FARE

Of course, one element that Cuarón was delighted to maintain was John Williams, and the legendary composer distinguished his final franchise collaboration (though his theme would repeat throughout the series) by complementing his existing score with the thrilling and chilling addition of the Frog Choir singing *Double Trouble*. With the lyrics taken from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* ('Something wicked this way comes!'), it adds another tinge of horror to go with the Dementors, the reveal that Lupin is a werewolf, the threat of the murderous Black, and the folk-horror vibe as a sense of ancient power emanates from Hogwarts' slopes and forests.

Some sequences are genuinely scary, and most frightening of all is when the Dementors descend upon the *Hogwarts Express* from a grey, rain-lashed sky [see boxout, below]. Did Heyman and Cuarón ever fear that *Azkaban* was *too* dark?

'You know, young people don't like to be patronised,' Heyman says. 'It's more parents worrying about their children than children worrying about themselves. So this is edgy. It's thrilling. And the kids, and adults, watching it are enthralled.'

'When I was at the set of the train, it reminded me so much of the Hitchcock films I had seen of the 30s and 40s,' says Cuarón, who worked with master puppeteer Basil Twist to map the movement of puppets performing underwater, in slow motion. The practical effects, though ultimately scrapped, provided creative direction for VFX house Industrial Light & Magic to invest the Dementors with the 'metaphysical quality' that Cuarón desired. But back to Hitch… 'I wanted to do something in that atmosphere. Like Hitchcock, it was more about the anticipation.'

All of these techniques and sequences were sewn together with as much skill as Cuarón brought to bear on stitching together the film's time-travel sequence, in which Hermione uses the Time-Turner to save Buckbeak from execution, and more. For that shot, about a minute's worth of action was filmed on Steadicam against bluescreen, and four minutes of background footage, shot separately, was then speeded up and composited behind the main action, while two other plates of background footage were tiled together as the camera turned. It was multiverse madness long before the MCU, and the result was dazzling.

The same with the movie, which opened in the UK on 31 May 2004 and scored the highest opening weekend at the box office in UK history – a record it kept until *Spectre*'s release in 2015. In the US and Canada, it enjoyed the third biggest opening weekend of all time, racking up a cool $93.7m. With a worldwide total of $795.6m, *Prisoner of Azkaban* was the second biggest movie of 2004, behind *Shrek 2*.

The reviews, too, were largely stellar, with *The Hollywood Reporter* calling it 'deeper, darker, visually arresting, and more emotionally satisfying' than the previous Potters, while *Rolling Stone* labelled it a 'dazzler'. Now, 20 years on, it's regarded by critics as the finest Potter movie, though Cuarón is far too modest to accept such praise.

'Critics should ask children and Average Joes!' he laughs. 'I'm grateful, but I have to say, if you ask fans and children, they have different views. But I was lucky that *Azkaban* is the most complex story. I saw it almost as a noir.'

Heyman, naturally, won't choose between his babies. 'They're all my children and they each mark different points in my life,' he says. 'I met my wife on the end of the second film, I brought my stepchildren onto the third film – Alfonso is my son's godfather. The friendships that I made are so significant. I do think three is a very a special film, but I also think one, two, four, five, six, seven and eight are, too.'

Cuarón concludes with a contented sigh. 'I was very generously asked if I wanted to stay in the series but I felt that *Prisoner of Azkaban* was such an incredible sense of discovery. I'd been learning every day and I didn't want to stop learning. It's such an incredible universe and I had such a beautiful time.'

HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN (20TH ANNIVERSARY) IS IN CINEMAS ON 31 MAY.

EYE OPENER

DIRECTOR ALFONSO CUARÓN AND PRODUCER DAVID HEYMAN ON HOW THE SCARY DEMENTORS-BOARD-THE-*HOGWARTS-EXPRESS* SEQUENCE ALMOST DERAILED...

ALFONSO CUARÓN

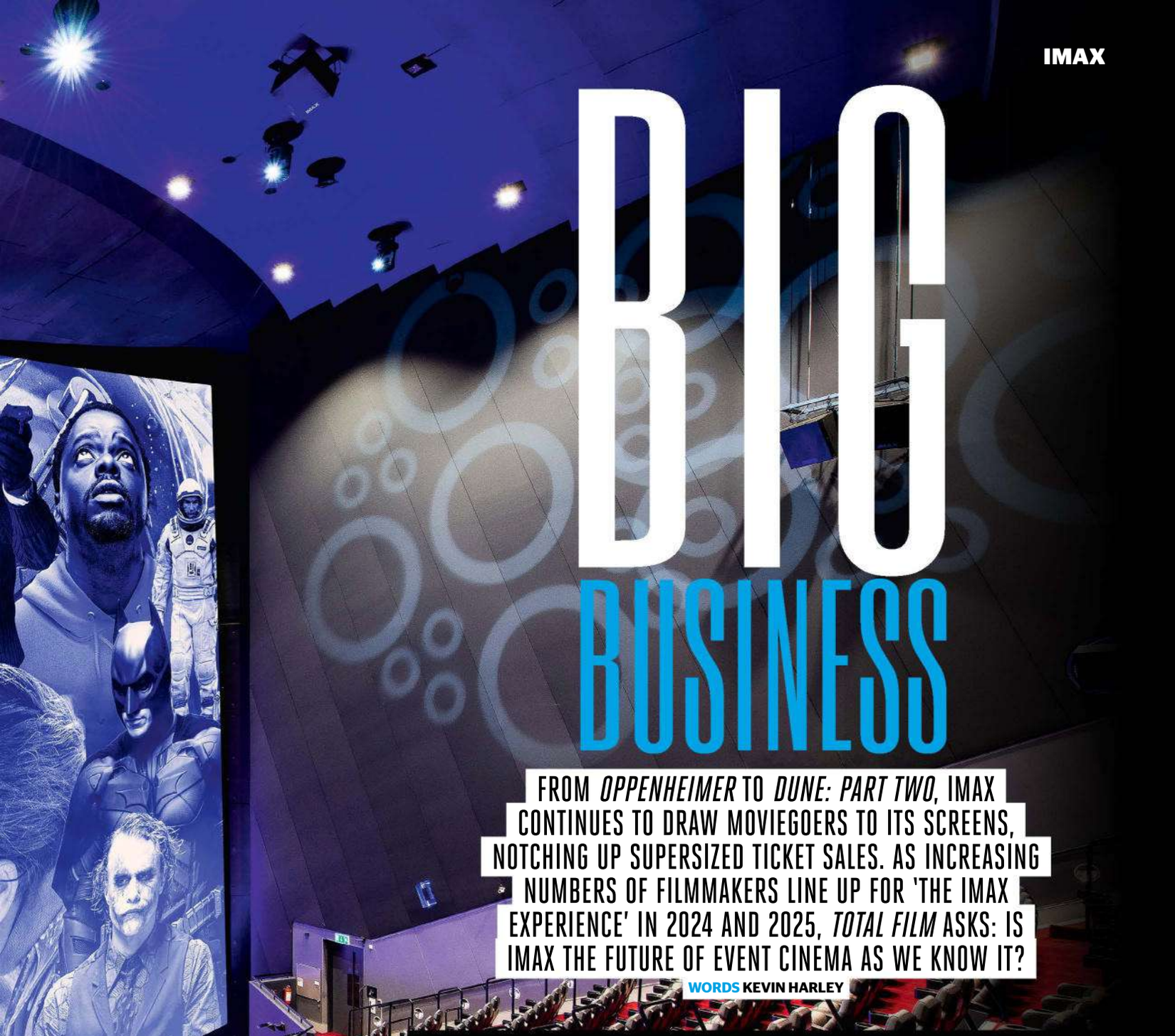
'The principles for visual effects were in many ways the same as I was using with mechanical means. I was ignorant [about VFX] but you work with people who know about that technology, and because you're ignorant you can challenge the technology. And the principles are the same. It is about light, and light integration.

'I did some storyboards for the Dementors on the train, then I would explain to my storyboard artist, Temple Clark. I was like, "And then the water" – because it was raining – "starts turning into ice." He was like, "OK, OK, I get it!" A week later, I was walking around and everyone was going, "Man, those boards. I don't know how you're going to do it but it's incredible. Visionary." I hadn't seen the storyboards. So I went and looked. When I said turning into "ice", meaning frozen water, the storyboards had "eyes", like how you see. The storyboards were teeming with eyeballs falling down from the sky. The problem was everyone had told me I was a genius. So I had to say things like, "Well, maybe it's too dark…"'

DAVID HEYMAN

'All these eyes started falling from the sky. We were thinking, "What is he trying to say?!"' **JG**

ALAMY, WARNER BROS.



BIG BUSINESS

FROM *OPPENHEIMER* TO *DUNE: PART TWO*, IMAX CONTINUES TO DRAW MOVIEGOERS TO ITS SCREENS, NOTCHING UP SUPERSIZED TICKET SALES. AS INCREASING NUMBERS OF FILMMAKERS LINE UP FOR 'THE IMAX EXPERIENCE' IN 2024 AND 2025, *TOTAL FILM* ASKS: IS IMAX THE FUTURE OF EVENT CINEMA AS WE KNOW IT?

WORDS **KEVIN HARLEY**

From Los Alamos to Arrakis, a rumbling in the sands of cinema has been heard lately. Denis Villeneuve channelled the vibrations in *Dune: Part Two*. Long after a young Chris Nolan thrilled to documentaries at the Museum of Science and Industry's giant dome theatre in Chicago, he conveyed the message with *Oppenheimer*. If you want to see these films how their makers intended, both preached, get thee to an IMAX.

Post-COVID-19, cinema's embattled state seems to make that gospel a tough sell. Streaming, the cost-of-living crisis, variations on 'superhero fatigue' (discuss) and post-strike delays have hit theatres and viewers hard. Yet as audiences embrace the piercing clarity, giddy scale and enveloping sound of IMAX – either digital or the revered large-frame 15/70 film format – IMAX's success remains remarkable.

In one sense, this can be attributed to timing. 'I think what we've seen since the pandemic is a reason to make a cinematic trip an event, certainly in the mainstream,' says Madeleine Mullett, programme manager at London's gorgeous BFI IMAX. 'We still have a lot of brilliant world cinema in the UK on arthouse and independent screens. But the "eventising" of films is something we saw large-scale with Barbenheimer and thank goodness, because it was a wonderful way to bring people back to the cinema… Making that trip special is something the IMAX experience encompasses.'

In 2023, proof resonated as IMAX banked its second-highest year of ticket sales ever with $1.06bn, just below 2019's $1.1bn. *Oppenheimer* netted $190m from IMAX screens – that's 20% of the film's global takings on 1% of the screens. In producer Emma Thomas' Oscar acceptance speech, she thanked IMAX CEO Richard Gelfond, helping anoint IMAX's status. And *Dune: Part Two* stands at $145.2m in IMAX sales as we go to press, number seven in the highest-grossing IMAX films to date.

As Gelfond, speaking to *Total Film*, notes of *Dune: Part Two*'s run, 'It blows me away that one in every five tickets on the planet is at an IMAX theatre. That's a remarkable vote of confidence.' And to understand what that vote is for, it's crucial to note what IMAX is not.

TECH NOTE

Neither a distributor nor exhibitor, IMAX is a technology company that licenses its brand, hardware and software to global exhibitors. Filmmakers can access its equipment, including eight notoriously noisy IMAX cameras and various IMAX-certified lenses, used to modify digital cameras. For Gelfond, IMAX's recent success pivots in part on an alliance of that technological development with audience confidence.

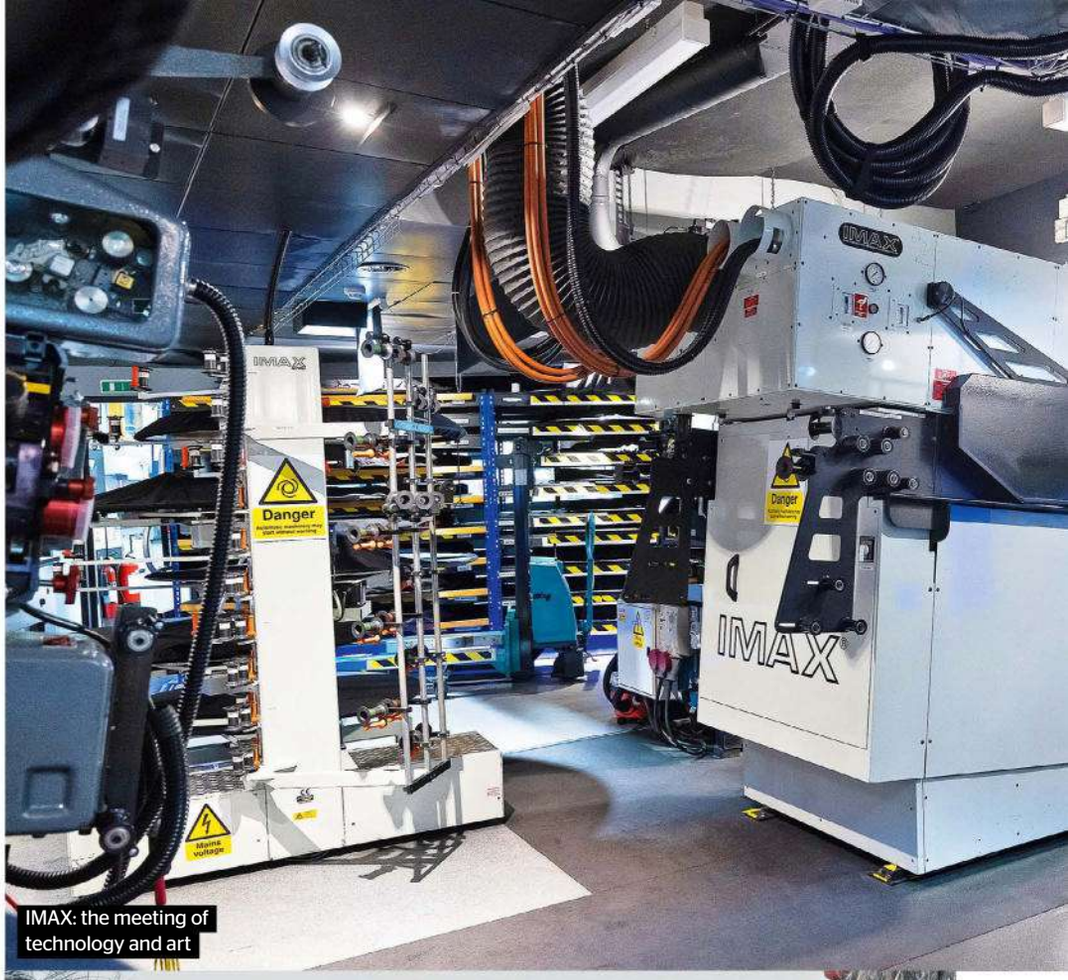
'We're building four new film cameras that will be easier to use and a little quieter. We've developed a program where filmmakers can use digital cameras to shoot on IMAX. Chris Nolan shot *Oppenheimer* with an IMAX camera and Denis Villeneuve used an IMAX digital camera, which works a little better in a special-effects-driven production. Success has built on itself in a lot of ways… It's kind of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy where people trust the filmmakers and trust that the best way to see their vision is projected and captured in IMAX.'

The story began in 1967, when Canadian filmmakers Graeme Ferguson and Roman Kroitor formed the corporation with businessman Robert Kerr. They conceived of technology that ran film horizontally through a projector, enabling the width of the image to exceed the film stock and thus create the immersive 15/70 format. Positioned close to the audience, floor-to-ceiling screens dominate the field of vision, maximising immersion in on-screen motion.

Science and nature docs monopolised programming initially and continue to feature, yet when Gelfond purchased the company in 1994, he tried to convince studios to adopt IMAX for feature films. 'We went to Steven Spielberg and said, "Would you consider making a movie in IMAX?" He said, "Call me back when you have 1,000 screens." Little did he know that would happen someday, but the economics were very difficult when the theatre footprint was small.'

The turn of the century brought progress with *Fantasia 2000* and an IMAX conversion of *Apollo 13*. *The Polar Express* 3D was, jokes Gelfond, 'The little engine that could.' Then came James Cameron's *Avatar*, shattering IMAX records, and Christopher Nolan. Since IMAX chief quality officer David Keighley converted the blue flower in *Batman Begins* to 6K as a test for Nolan, the director's conversion to the format has bloomed. And IMAX has blossomed in sync. 'Chris is so innovative,' says Gelfond. 'He not only takes what IMAX is but he thinks of what it could be.'

The BFI IMAX is well-equipped to honour that ambition. 'We get the few IMAX 15/70 prints that are available globally,' says Mullett, 'and we have a wonderful projection team with an amazing tech team. For *Dune: Part Two* we had the only print outside the US except for Melbourne. We house and archive these prints and every time we screen these films, we screen them ideally on print, because we're a print cinema first and foremost. That adds to it being an event.'



IMAX: the meeting of technology and art

Writer-director Christopher Nolan has utilised the format's power on numerous films

TO THE MAX

Of course, not all IMAX cinemas are created equal, raising a question. If you can't get to a bespoke IMAX theatre like the BFI, is digital IMAX at a multiplex worth it? And for a film like, say, *The Batman*, which doesn't boast IMAX's extended aspect ratio (26% extra at the top/bottom), would you still get the IMAX experience even at the BFI?

'A lot of it is experiential,' says Mullett. 'Watching anything on the largest screen in the UK adds a depth to it like nothing else and it really is about experiencing something different. You feel the film… And there's a sound element. We have a 12-channel sound system at the BFI IMAX, so there is more sound than I've heard in any other film.'

Also notable is IMAX's DMR (digital media remastering) process, which uses proprietary algorithms to digitally up-convert films for IMAX. Close collaboration with the filmmaker is involved, as suggested when *The Batman* director Matt Reeves tweeted his approval. 'Even if it's not shot with the cameras, we still "up-res" the content,' says Gelfond. 'We sharpen the edges, make the blacks blacker. It's the same film you could have seen on a regular digital screen, or 35mm screen, though

BFI

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Reel stories: IMAX uses both digital and trad formats

when you blow it up you lose quality. But in the DMR process we've created algorithms that interpolate what it would have been like if it was filmed with IMAX cameras… There's nothing quite like 70mm, but even though I hate to quantify it, in my judgement you get about 80% of that if it's not shot with the cameras but it's gone through our process.'

Another debating point is that although the most desired viewing format is the combination of 15/70 cameras with a floor-to-ceiling 1.43:1 aspect ratio, that's only available on three screens in the UK: the BFI's beautiful behemoth, the London Science Museum and Manchester Printworks. The results can look incredible, but viewers may have to travel.

For Gelfond, this is a consequence of working with prints. 'Film has a number of challenges. The projectors are about 50 years old and there's not many of them left. We've done a little exploring as to whether we can build more and what the costs are, but it's almost analogous to vinyl records in that the infrastructure around making it is not what it was years ago. A second thing is that Kodak has largely pared down the film business, so there's not a supply of film. When Chris wanted to shoot [some of *Oppenheimer*] in black-and-white, Kodak had to bring people out of retirement to figure out how to manufacture black-and-white film.'

At any rate, IMAX takes pride in quality and the personal touch. A former projectionist, Mullett spotlights the BFI's unflappable projection team and the hands-on input of IMAX's chief quality officer. 'David Keighley is in direct contact with the projectionists who handle prints,' she says. 'Quite often he will hand-deliver the IMAX 15/70 prints himself.'

> 'CHRISTOPHER NOLAN IS SO INNOVATIVE – HE NOT ONLY TAKES WHAT IMAX IS BUT HE THINKS OF WHAT IT COULD BE'
> **RICHARD GELFOND**

'We named our theatre in Los Angeles, at our headquarters, the David Keighley Theater,' says Gelfond. 'Whenever I go to LA, which is frequent, one of my first stops is David's office. He's part of the DNA of IMAX. One of the issues I mentioned about making sure film endures is that we have to look at every aspect, including finding protégés for David and [his wife and fellow quality officer] Patricia Keighley… We're quite committed to making sure film endures.'

THE BIG PICTURE

A commitment to diverse programming is also crucial, beyond 'event' movies. Mullett mentions *Furiosa* and *Civil War* as cases of 'incredible cinema' by bold filmmakers that suit IMAX well. Mullett and Gelfond cite concert films as evidence of IMAX's 'event' viewing clout, ranging from *Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour* to restorations of *Queen Rock Montreal* and *Stop Making Sense*, which flaunt IMAX's sound system spectacularly. 'There's room for everything on that screen,' says Mullett.

As for whether IMAX can build on its momentum after post-strike release-date delays, signs are good. Among others, 2024's *Joker: Folie à Deux* will follow *Dune: Part Two*'s example of transferring from IMAX digital cameras to film. Next year includes Bong Joon-ho's *Mickey 17*, several superhero revivals (*The Fantastic Four* and *Superman* included), Paul Thomas Anderson's new film and *Avatar 3*, whose predecessors remain the biggest-grossing films on IMAX screens. And Gelfond has negotiated *Mission: Impossible 8*'s slot with Tom Cruise, after prior commitments to Nolan saw *Oppenheimer* sideline *Dead Reckoning Part One*'s 2023 IMAX stay.

For Gelfond, the proliferation of directors wanting to work with IMAX is cause for optimism. 'For 2025, we have more films using IMAX cameras than we've had in any year. At one stretch in the summer, we have seven films in a row filmed with IMAX cameras… And if I told you my call list [of filmmakers], not only would you not believe it – I don't think I believe it. People are really coming out of the woodwork.'

When Villeneuve submitted his desert-sized votes of confidence, he commented, 'I strongly believe that the future of cinema is linked with IMAX.' But you needn't drink the sandworms's juice to see that future. It's already here, several storeys high, so clear and tangible you can almost touch it.

IMAX allows viewers to see more of epics such as 2024's *Dune: Part Two*

BFI IMAX IS SCREENING THE VENUE'S MOST POPULAR FILMS ACROSS THE SUMMER TO CELEBRATE ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY FROM 11 JUNE.

INTERVIEW JAMES MOTTRAM

‘I REALLY BELIEVE IF I’M HERE ON THIS PLANET, I MIGHT AS WELL TRY AND CONTRIBUTE TO SOMETHING THAT IS ALIVE.’

VICKY KRIEPS

Ever since going toe to toe with Daniel Day-Lewis in *Phantom Thread*, Vicky Krieps has emerged as one of Europe’s most distinguished actors. Now, as she saddles up for Viggo Mortensen’s elegiac western *The Dead Don’t Hurt*, the outspoken Luxembourg-born star tells *Total Film* just why she won’t compromise her ideals for anything...

PORTRAITS GARETH CATTERMOLE

GARETH CATTERMOLE/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

As Vicky Krieps pops up on video chat, sporting a red jumper and a big smile, *Total Film*'s eye immediately does a recce around the Berlin-based living room that she shares with her partner and two children. Behind her, a heaving bookshelf, including a copy of Frank O'Hara's *Lunch Poems*. It's unsurprising to find this actor so well read; ever since she came to international attention in Paul Thomas Anderson's finely stitched 2017 drama *Phantom Thread*, opposite Daniel Day-Lewis, her choices have been those of someone who cares about good writing, about quality cinema.

It's the end of April, just over a year from when *TF* last met Krieps at the Berlin Film Festival, when she was premiering the German film *Journey into the Desert*, playing the poet Ingeborg Bachmann. Then, in interview, she was playful, open, outspoken and painfully honest. 'Maybe one day I will have to pay for this,' she said, wryly, but it's clear that Krieps can't function any other way. She simply can't buy into Hollywood BS. And when she's so in demand by some of world cinema's finest directors, why should she?

This June sees her deliver another nuanced performance in *The Dead Don't Hurt*, the second feature directed by actor Viggo Mortensen. Set in 1860s Nevada, he plays Danish immigrant carpenter Holger Olsen, who falls for Krieps' Vivienne Le Coudy, an independently minded woman who has recently separated from her boorish husband. Meditative and Malick-like in its compositions, it's also a tender look at frontier living – until that is, Holger disappears to fight in the Civil War. A superior western, it's exactly what you might hope for from actors like Krieps and Mortensen.

Seeing Krieps on American soil is something of a surprise, being an actor so intimately associated with Europe. Born in Hesperange, Luxembourg, Krieps' childhood was free-spirited. 'My mum was a feminist, hippy kind of woman,' she explains. 'I was always barefoot and I always had trousers and I always had short hair.' Her father, who studied politics and history, managed a film-distribution company, although he was more interested in the business than the art of cinema.

In her early years, she trained at the Conservatoire de Luxembourg and later Zurich's University of the Arts, but it was a trip to South Africa, where she worked in a primary school, that cemented her desire to act. The plan was always to perform in theatre, but gradually film roles came along – including Joe Wright's actioner *Hanna* and Anton Corbijn's *A Most Wanted Man* – before Anderson cast her as Alma, the woman who enchants Day-Lewis' fashion designer in *Phantom Thread*.

Since then, Krieps has astounded more than once, most notably in *Corsage*, winning Best Actress at the European Film Awards for playing Empress Elisabeth of Austria. With the film launched in Cannes' Un Certain Regard sidebar, Krieps is currently going full circle – taking on a jury role in the very same strand at this year's festival. Her Cannes experiences have always been frantic. 'One time I even went with my kids and it was a total schedule disaster!' she giggles. 'So I'm really looking forward to seeing the place and the movies.' Spoken like a true cineaste…

In her breakout role as Alma in 2017's *Phantom Thread*

What were your initial thoughts when you came onto set to start work on *The Dead Don't Hurt*?
It was a western film but it felt so different. You spend your time watching a woman just live her life. It's not even sensational or anything special. And at the same time, it's very much a western movie, when you're in the saloon. I remember shooting these scenes and it felt very classic western, with the guys, with the guns. So it's really a hybrid between the two.

How was it working with Viggo?
I love working with him. He knows how to act, but he also wrote the script and I think he wrote it really well. And he composed the music… He really just wanted to make the movie he would want to see. He's really humble in that way. It's just his vision of what he would like to make for a movie. It's not like the kind of movie that wants to impress you by the form or impress you by [making] some sort of political statement.

Was it tough to make?
It was really hard to do, because it was very tiring outside. And it was a very male set. Viggo is a very sensitive man, but then, it's a western movie. So you have many male characters. So there were a lot of men. And it was really hard for me to always be the woman, the suffering woman. But again, she's also very strong and I like her.

It must be nice to do a western because not many get made these days…
It was nice. It was definitely nice. Absolutely. But you know you are in this male context. And men are different kinds of actors often. Not always. I guess probably Paul Mescal would be doing it more like me, but I think maybe it's

ALAMY, SIGNATURE ENTERTAINMENT

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

With Viggo Mortensen in upcoming western *The Dead Don't Hurt*

easier for him to act with – or like – someone like Viggo or these men. But I am so [her voice drops to a whisper] quiet when I work. I really try to be where I am. And they are so loud! So that's sometimes not easy for me when I'm surrounded by so many men, which is not a bad thing. And I'm not saying it as a critique, because I find it's sometimes not easy to get my own space or my own silence that I need.

You've described your upbringing as quite free…
Yes, very much and I'm still struggling to function! I just mean in a figurative way. When you've grown up free and wild, you can imagine that there's a point where you have to realise that that's not how our society runs and you have to learn to behave in ways. I feel like I'm still figuring it out.

But when you were a kid, was it all about make-believe?
Yes. I mean, I remember going a lot into the woods. And I also remember having dreams a lot… not parallel universes, but parallel possibilities of the life I could have. I grew up on the remains of an old castle. So we would always play around the ruins and I think that influenced me more than I would ever say; just the architecture, being surrounded with these old stones. I would take all the kids from the neighbourhood and I would tell stories. They were usually scary stories: 'No, quick, quick run. They're coming!' Sometimes I would push myself so far that I would get scared of my own stuff. Because I wouldn't know if it was real or not.

'I SEE MYSELF LIKE A SCIENTIST, INTERESTED IN HUMAN NATURE'

So what motivated you to become an actor?
I think I wanted to be an actress before I knew I wanted to be an actress because I'm from Luxembourg. And if you're from a small place it's really difficult to believe in yourself. So I would have never dared to think that I could become an actress. Actors for me, they came from Paris or they came from big cities, but not from Hesperange, Luxembourg; it's nowhere. I cannot tell you what it was in me… I'm just so incredibly curious in people and life itself. I see myself like a scientist, interested in human nature. How to understand them? And what are they doing? Why are they doing it? Humans are so sweet, how they have their little living room… Every day they get up in the morning and they have a life. I find it so fascinating. I could think about it for hours. And so this is, I think, why I became an actor, to understand people and help people understand themselves.

Is it true that you almost ignored the initial email you got about *Phantom Thread*?
You see… I was not expecting anything like an email from Paul Thomas Anderson. You wouldn't. So when I get emails like this, I always try to be as honest as I can to the work, to the script. So therefore, I don't read names, because I don't want to be misled by what I think about a name. I want the words to speak for themselves. That's what I do. And in this case, I did it too. And I had a very strong connection to this text. I was on my way to Berlin in a bus. I just thought, 'OK, when I get back I will tape this,' which I did. I just taped it and I sent it. And for some reason, I didn't go back to reading the email, because I think I was just busy with something else. And then when my agent called me to say, 'Well, the director is very, very pleased. And he's asking for your

phone number?' I said, 'Of course.' Because I was [being] so cool, she said, 'Vicky, do you know who we are talking about?' I said, 'Oh no. I didn't read the name. It's a student film in England, right?' In the meantime, my mind had constructed this because I had half-read the name 'London'. And then because it was not a script, but only a piece of monologue, I thought maybe someone is doing a short movie!

How about Daniel Day-Lewis? How did you first encounter him?
I met him once before in the Covent Garden Hotel to do a reading of the script. That was the end of June. And I never met him again until on set in character. And I was told this is how he wanted to work and I accepted it. I didn't know what was going to come. But I knew that I had to be prepared in a way that you cannot prepare. So I decided to not prepare and I decided to be like a white canvas, where the story could be drawn onto [it], and I just tried to forget maybe what I would like to achieve in a movie or what I would like to achieve working with someone like Daniel Day-Lewis. I forgot about who he was, who he's supposed to be. But this meeting, the first one, wasn't unimportant, because on this day, I remember that me, Paul and Daniel, all three of us – and it's craziest for me, because of who I am, where I come from – we all had the feeling that something was obvious about the meeting. So when we read the script, it felt as if the film was in the room. And I used this, of course, to give me strength and courage and to think, 'OK, maybe I can do this.'

That film shot you into the mainstream. How do you reflect on these last few years since then?
If I reflect on it now, I realised I broke the first biggest contract with society, which was I have been chosen to be the actress in the movie of Paul Thomas Anderson, blah, blah, blah. And I was supposed to then be the girl of *Phantom Thread*. And I broke out of it. And I said 'no' to it. And I didn't have an agent. I didn't do any of the American movies they were proposing. And I went back to France and I did really small movies. I mean, one of them was not so little – *Hold Me Tight* – and it's a beautiful movie. But when I was making these decisions, people around me were thinking I was crazy, saying, 'You can't do this.' They wanted me to do *Death on the Nile*. It was so much money… and they really thought it was crazy, to say 'no' to this fame and to this money and this career.

FIVE STAR TURNS

PHANTOM THREAD 2017
Paul Thomas Anderson knew he was right to cast the little-known Krieps as unyielding Alma opposite Daniel Day-Lewis' Reynolds Woodcock because she was unfazed upon meeting the acting titan. 'We thought, "This is the girl, how did we get so lucky?"'

BERGMAN ISLAND 2021
Krieps and Tim Roth excel as a couple who travel to the island of Fårö, where Ingmar Bergman resided, to write their screenplays. 'The actress gets to unfurl the full tapestry of her talent,' wrote *The Hollywood Reporter*.

OLD 2021
Proving she could swap arthouse for mainstream, Krieps was the mum of a vacationing family trapped on a beach where people rapidly age. Not many could maintain dignity while gasping, 'He was six years old this morning!'

CORSAGE 2022
Another emphatic but empathetic performance, this time as Empress Elisabeth in 1870s Austria, rallying against society's strictures as she turns 40. *Time Out* held the film up against *The Favourite* and praised Krieps' 'bold and brilliant' turn.

THE THREE MUSKETEERS 2023
Martin Bourboulon's swashbuckling two-parter (*D'Artagnan* and *Milady*) is mainly about Eva Green's Milady and those blade-wielding heroes, but Krieps' Anne d'Autriche is a joy whenever she pops up. Handles a gun, in a frock, very nicely. JG

ALAMY

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Krieps' Clarisse walks away from her family in 2021's *Hold Me Tight*

The tradition is to make one big Hollywood movie and one for the heart…
That's what they make you believe, yeah? But it's up to you to break it. Or try and see [if you can]. And that's what I do.

Everyone needs money. It must be hard to turn down those pay cheques…
Yeah, but then I prefer to sleep well at night. That's really true. Because I had moments in my life – in lockdown, or whatever – when we had no money. People don't believe me, I was at zero-zero… nothing. I went to my sister, she lent me money, blah, blah, blah. And I have two kids. So it's not like I'm not risking it. It's actually… It is risky, what I do. It's just that I really believe if I'm here on this planet, I might as well try and contribute to something that is, as I say, alive. Otherwise I can go to sleep [fitfully] and pay [a lot of] money for a psychiatrist!

At the Berlin premiere for *Journey into the Desert*, you stuck your tongue out at the camera. Is this a way for you to deal with the pressures of the red carpet?
Yeah. And reminding everyone that it is not serious. It's not serious. They make me believe it's serious. They make me believe it's very important how I look. But I know it's not important how I look. And I know it's not important how people think that I look or how people think how good an actor I am. But again, it's a very personal thing I have and it's a huge risk, because I'm really vulnerable and open and if you want, you can destroy me. But then I will not take it seriously.

How do you find doing press?
This part I love because… what you do [as a journalist] is you watch movies, and so you love watching movies. And luckily, journalists are still people who know how to think. So I have really awesome conversations about life. Which again, goes back to the choice of my movies. I don't even want to know the kind of conversation you have when you do *Death on the Nile*. And how much silence I would need then and how little I would find because then they really come at you. Like now, no one really cares about me. I mean, yes, my work and people from the industry… but other than that, you can't really make money with me. Not really. Not this kind of money.

'YOU CAN'T REALLY MAKE MONEY WITH ME. NOT REALLY'

But you did choose to make *Old* with M. Night Shyamalan…
Yeah, but it was in lockdown when no one went to the cinema. It was not really a big commercial success.

It was still probably a great experience to work with him, right?
Yes, it was very different.

Your co-star Gael García Bernal talked about how amazing it was to work on the beach in the Dominican Republic…
It was beautiful, but it was in lockdown. And we were only in the hotel or on one beach. We had to work the whole day, there was no lunch break; it was what they call a 'running lunch'. The cameraman one day fainted because we were standing in the bloody sun the whole day working. It was just really hot. And we were not that well and the food was not really good because it was at the beach and hot, and no one really enjoyed it.

Do you see a difference between playing fictional and historical characters?
Well, even if it's a fictional character, oftentimes… Let's say if I was doing *Bergman Island*, right? A fictional character but it is also [inspired by the film's writer-director] Mia Hansen-Løve. So most of the characters will always be somehow drawn out of the director

VICKY KRIEPS IN NUMBERS

1
César Awards nomination for Best Actress for *Hold Me Tight*

58
Credits on IMDb (37 prior to her 2017 breakthrough *Phantom Thread*).

4
Krieps' films that have premiered at the Cannes Film Festival.

$90M
Box office take of Krieps' highest-grossing film, *Old*.

26
Age difference in years between Krieps and *Phantom Thread* co-star Daniel Day-Lewis.

or out of something… which again is something you have to free yourself from because otherwise… I imagine I would have thought about being Hansen-Løve when I'm next to her, then I couldn't be free.

You also featured in *The Three Musketeers* films recently. Is there something about period pieces you find intoxicating?
I think this is maybe my favourite thing and I'll tell you why. Because when I started acting – and I was just this little actress, not even an actress, not even calling myself an actress – even in my early theatre roles, or if I was doing a small, short movie, I always felt my grandmothers were with me. I don't know why. I don't even have a perfect way of putting this but it was really just a feeling… It almost feels like all these other women before me want to speak through me. If this is collective memory or whatever you call it… I felt like that always and I think this is why I am always drawn to these women in other times. In the

'MY ACT OF REBELLION IS BEING AN ACTRESS WHO'S INTUITIVE'

Musketeers, I had a lot of fun playing with the thought that this woman was maybe ahead of her time. So, instead of saying, 'Oh, she's the bad one, she has a lover and then she gives him the necklace,' say, 'Maybe they have an open marriage…' I don't know, I always find something in them that I can relate to from nowadays.

How special was *Corsage* for you? You won prizes including Best Actress at the European Film Awards…
Yes, and it was a real moment because it was very satisfying in the sense that it was the most personal film. And it was really a small film. It was made in a very small way with little money and it was between me and [writer-director] Marie Kreutzer. So it was a very personal dialogue of two women and it was a difficult kind of movie you wouldn't expect to win anything. You wouldn't even expect people to see it. I did a similar movie many years before called *The Chambermaid Lynn*, which PTA saw. When the movie came out… literally no one saw that film. *Corsage*, I would have thought maybe a bit more but I never expected it to go to Cannes and have any

ALAMY, GARETH CATTERMOLE/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

As Empress Elisabeth of Austria in Marie Kreutzer's *Corsage* (2022)

of the life it had. So that was the most rewarding thing. If you have something to say and it's an honest feeling and we really had something to say as women… then you will find your audience.

Do you think in terms of supporting women directors when you choose a project? Or do you follow your heart?
Yeah, I follow my intuition. Only. I can decide upon a script, I can decide upon a person, I will not let myself be… using any kind of structure. Thinking of my career, or thinking of the money… I will always do it as an intuitive act, because this is my act of rebellion. My act of rebellion is being an actress who's intuitive, and who's not trying to please or trying to follow a lead or trying to be accepted or getting good reviews. Like, if I would do this to get good reviews, I would again follow a structure that has been put there for me to follow. But then it's boring, then it's not art, or not political, or then it's not alive. And I think it has to be alive. And especially now when everything becomes so dead because of the [way we are always on the] phone and we are communicating constantly. Like, 'I'm here, five minutes', 'I'm leaving now. Where are you?', 'Around the corner in the cab now.' So we are constantly communicating but we don't say anything. We are not communicating while we are communicating. I don't know if you agree, but it feels like it's making everything so slow. It's like it's under a blanket. So what I do is I try to do anything I can to be alive and what I do is be something that is out of the ordinary so that we become alive together.

What can you tell us about the new Jim Jarmusch movie, *Father, Mother, Sister, Brother*?
Um, it's about family, really. It's a tale about family. It's like a three-part movie. So I'm only in one part of the whole thing. And my part… I can tell you that because there was a picture the paparazzi took with me and Cate Blanchett and Charlotte Rampling. That's our little part of the whole three-part movie.

Away from the world of film, what do you to to relax?
Nothing. Watching movies, going for a walk, doing nothing, cleaning my kitchen, washing my clothes, cleaning the toilet. Listening to my kids… having problems with my kids, solving the problems of my kids, making food for my kids, cleaning the shit up afterwards, doing homework with them. Just normal stuff.

And what about reading poetry?
Yes, when I can. That's something I love to do. Next to my bed, I have, like, all these wonderful books I've never read. I read a little bit. And then there's always something, you know…

In the past you've been very open about your negative feelings towards streamers like Netflix. Why?
I said, 'I hate Netflix!' I think they never forgave me! I'm still waiting for the bomb in my briefcase!

What do you think about people going less and less to the cinemas and watching films?
Well, I think it's terrible. I think it's no surprise because it's something we chose to do. And when it was happening, we knew it. And people were saying it. And then they were just like, 'Yeah, whatever.' That's exactly what I said about Netflix. I said, 'Listen, guys, you pretend that you are going to help the cinema, because people will be more aware about cinema.' It's not bloody true. And it was clear from the beginning. That's what they were doing. They started it. And I remember the first time I had my Netflix account, I was like, 'OK, let's see.' I go on there. And I want to watch [Alfred] Hitchcock, it was almost impossible to find. OK, so you go and find something maybe similar. These are the movies I'm watching. And they tell you that they're going to show you to your taste. And what is there? American whatever… *Batman Returns*. That's not true. You are trying to influence me to watch *Batman Returns*, or *Sex Education*, instead of Hitchcock.

You can blame the Netflix algorithm for that…
That's what Netflix is pretending – they have this beautiful library of what you love to watch, when they are trying to change your view. Of course that's what they do.

THE DEAD DON'T HURT OPENS IN CINEMAS FROM 7 JUNE.

VICKY KRIEPS LINE READING

'IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A STARING CONTEST WITH ME, YOU WILL LOSE.'
ALMA
PHANTOM THREAD

'A lion doesn't lose sleep over the opinion of sheep.'
EMPRESS ELISABETH
CORSAGE

'ALL THIS CALM AND PERFECTION, I FIND IT OPPRESSIVE.'
CHRIS
BERGMAN ISLAND

EDITED BY
MATTHEW LEYLAND
@TOTALFILM_MATTL

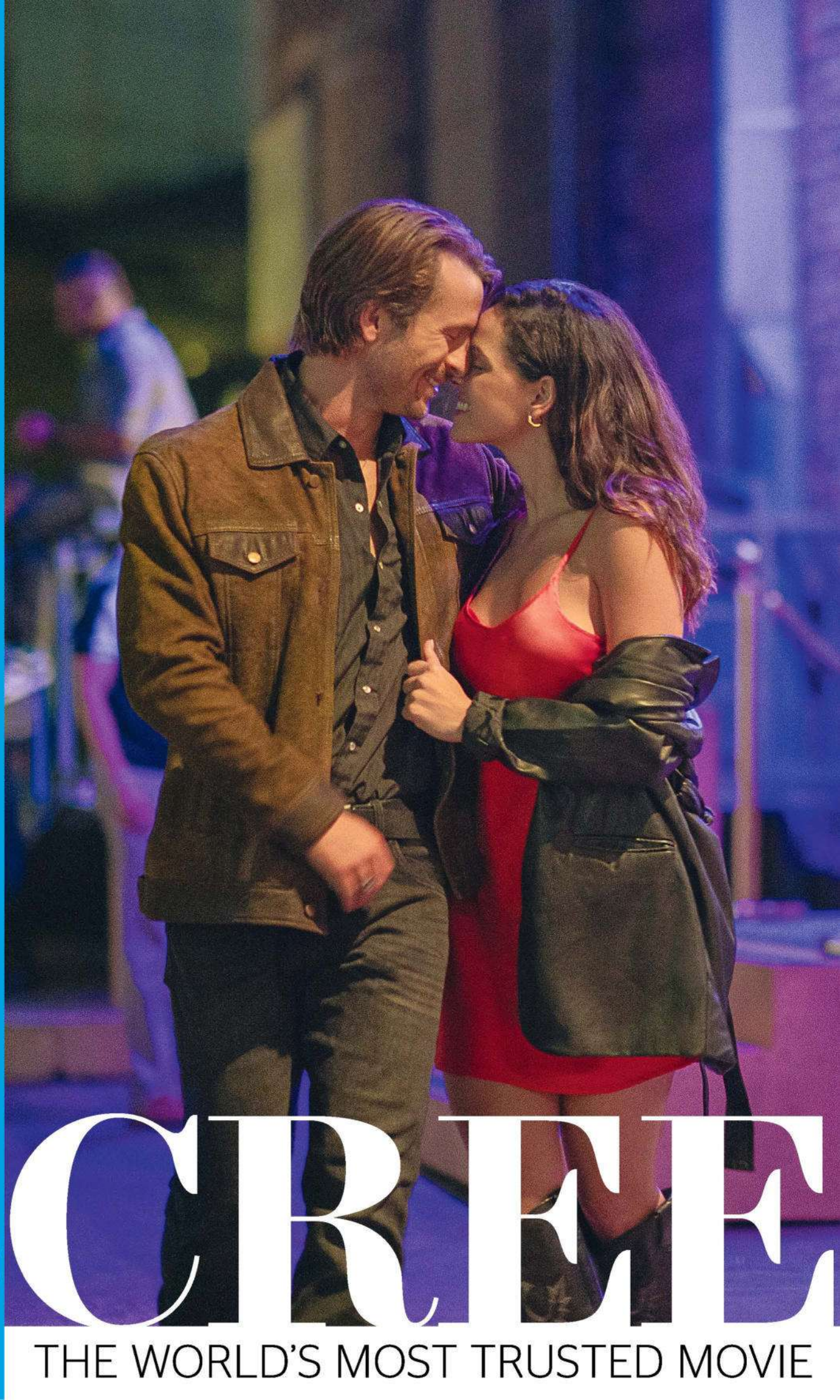
★★★★★
TAKES YOU HIRE

★★★★½
SUPERB EXECUTION

★★★½☆
WORTH A SHOT

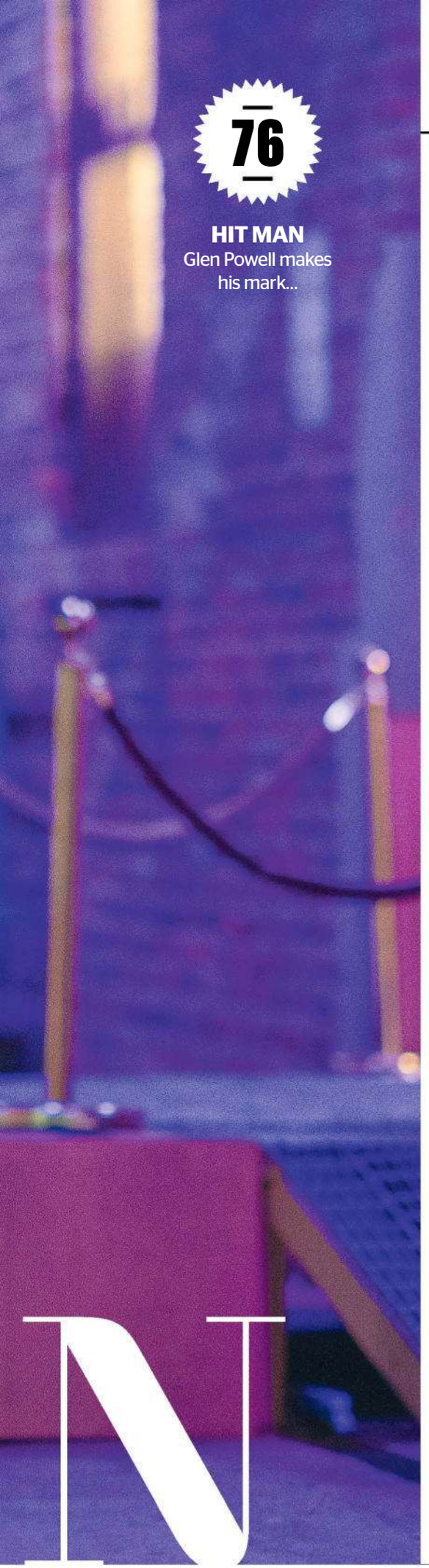
★★☆☆☆
FIRES BLANKS

★☆☆☆☆
LEAVES NO TRACE



SCREEN

THE WORLD'S MOST TRUSTED MOVIE



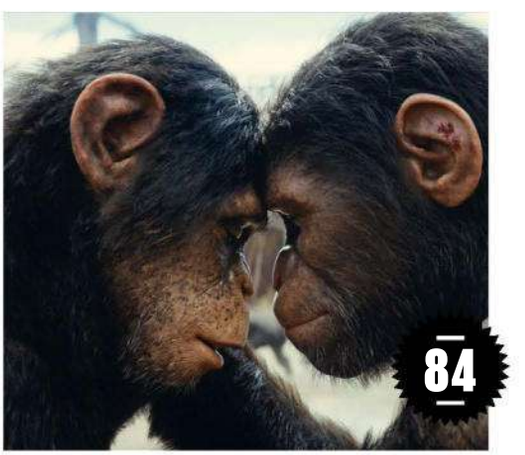
76

HIT MAN
Glen Powell makes his mark...

REVIEWS

78

82



84

80

OUT NOW

Bermondsey Tales: Fall of the Roman Empire	★★	p84
Black Stone	★★★★	p84
The Coffee Table	★★★★	p79
Enter the Clones of Bruce	★★★★	p86
A Family Affair	★★	p85
IF	★★	p82
Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes	★★★	p84
Riddle of Fire	★★★	p81
Unfrosted	★★★★	p83

24 MAY

Hit Man	★★★★	p76
In Flames	★★★	p79
The Present	★★	p85
Slow	★★★★	p84

27 MAY

Cabrini	★★	p81
Pandemonium	★★★★	p86
William Shatner: You Can Call Me Bill	★★★★	p82

31 MAY

The Beast	★★★	p81
Gasoline Rainbow	★★★★	p85
A House in Jerusalem	★★★★	p83
Little Monsters	★★	p86
Sting	★★★	p78
Stopmotion	★★★★	p83

1 JUNE

Bonus Track	★★★	p79

3 JUNE

New Life	★★★★	p85

7 JUNE

The Dead Don't Hurt	★★★★	p80
Here	★★★	p83
Poolman	★	p85
Rosalie	★★★★	p79

14 JUNE

Àma Gloria	★★★★	p81
Freud's Last Session	★★	p79
Hounds	★★★	p83
Next Sohee	★★★★	p86
Sasquatch Sunset	★★★★	p78
Sorcery	★★★	p84
Treasure	★★	p86
Wilding	★★★	p81

ALSO RELEASED

We couldn't see them in time for this issue, so head to gamesradar.com/totalfilm for reviews of the following:

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Bad Boys: Ride or Die	5 June
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga	24 May
The Garfield Movie	24 May
Inside Out 2	14 June
The Strangers: Chapter 1	Out now
The Watched	14 June
Young Woman and the Sea	31 May

For more reviews visit gamesradar.com/totalfilm

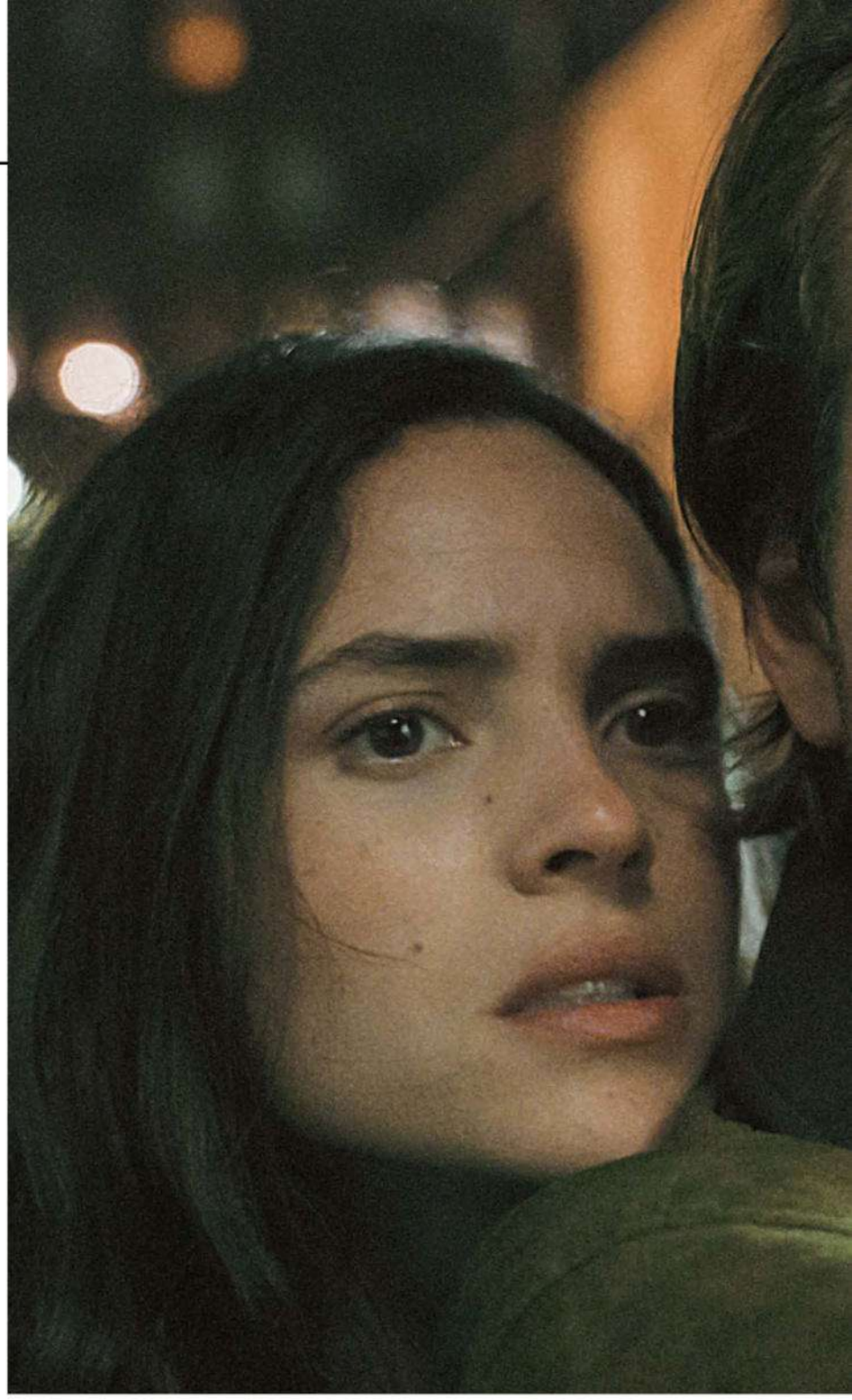
EXTRAS

Archive/Blu-ray reviews	p87-89
TV, Extras, Soundtracks, Games, Books	p90-94

HIT MAN 15

Loaded with charm...

★★★★★ **OUT 24 MAY** CINEMAS **7 JUNE** NETFLIX



Like David Fincher's *The Killer*, *Hit Man* centres on an introspective assassin who likes to narrate his work ethic. Unlike Fincher's film, Richard Linklater's romcom-with-guns plays like an update of *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (the Brangelina version). Funny, sexy and smart, it only amps further the star wattage of our current cover star Glen Powell, who also co-wrote.

Powell plays Gary Johnson, a nebbish New Orleans psychology lecturer who tops up his income with undercover tech work for the NOPD. Divorced Gary, with his 'perfectly forgettable face', unremarkable clothes (two words: comfort shoes), birdwatching hobby and car so ordinary his students make fun of it, creates the wiretaps for undercover stings, ensnaring those looking to hire a hitman.

Gary tutors his class in the concept of self – a neat throughline that plays out alongside his metamorphosis from sap to stud via some deft role play. During one sting, the cop who usually plays the fake hit man (their existence is 'myth', our narrator tells us) is benched, leaving the tech guy as the only option to head in with a wire. Forced to step into a persona, Gary mines a dormant baller side of himself – the troubadour, the badass – and he's soon acing the hitman routine in a series of ridiculous guises; Powell, using that charisma familiar from *Top Gun: Maverick*, doesn't disappoint.

Tailoring his performance to each client via social-media snooping, Gary's channelling the most charming of his creations, Ron, when he meets Madison (*Andor*'s Adria Arjona), a young woman trapped in an abusive marriage. There's an instant connection (one that recalls the heat of Lopez and Clooney in 90s rom-thriller *Out of Sight*). 'What if your self is a construct?' he asks the audience. And what happens when Gary wants to remain Ron?

Based on a feature in *Texas Monthly* magazine article by Skip Hollandsworth about a real-life Houston police officer who made a career as the state's most prolific faux contract killer, Linklater's breezy film is unapologetically commercial and fun. It taps into the concepts of identity and psychological self-styling so prevalent in our social-media existence. It also offers a dose of wish fulfilment via a delightful screwball tone that harks back to the late 90s. The idea of being trapped in a falsehood isn't new, but Linklater plays fresh riffs on notions of id, ego and superego and how we, and society, dictate which is more prevalent.

DIRECTOR Richard Linklater **STARRING** Glen Powell, Adria Arjona, Austin Amelio, Retta, Molly Bernard **SCREENPLAY** Richard Linklater, Glen Powell **DISTRIBUTOR** Netflix **RUNNING TIME** 115 mins

NETFLIX

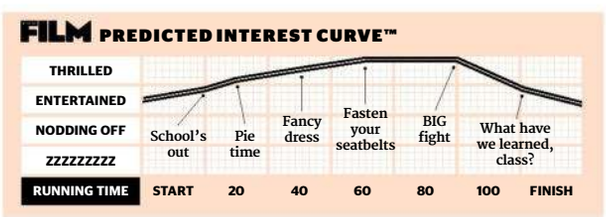
SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED

OUT OF SIGHT
1998
Lopez and Clooney's sizzle (and law-enforcement/perp dynamic) is echoed by Powell and Arjona.

OFFICE SPACE
1999
Dweeby pen-pusher experiments with ballsy alt-persona, reaps rewards.

MR. & MRS. SMITH
2005
Murder, assassins, weapons, secret identities – but made super-sexy. Is that a gun in your pocket?

For more reviews visit gamesradar.com/totalfilm



SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

It's a tense time for Madison and Gary... Or maybe Ron... Or one of the others...

Loaded with noirish zingers ('Chivalry may be dead, but I didn't kill it') and delicious performances, *Hit Man* also sees Linklater operating outside of his usual Texan stomping ground. Unfamiliar territory, then, although there are clear echoes of his previous work – the electric chemistry between Powell/Arjona, for example, recalls Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy's sizzling rapport in the Before Trilogy. (Though we actually get the filmmaker's first sex scene here – and it's scorching.)

Of course, it patently takes a little more than changing your hair parting, unbuttoning your shirt low and wearing a really great jacket to become a heart-throb. But nice-guy Gary's transformation is as crowd-pleasing as any Cinderella moment. 'When did our teacher get hot?' marvels one student. Meanwhile, Powell's flirty, sexy, even argumentative scenes with Arjona are truly combustible – like watching Brangelina happen on screen – especially when the charismatic pair agree the terms of their unconventional relationship while cosplaying the mile-high club. They even manage to sell a touching declaration as a man expires at their feet. Audiences will fall in love with both of them. And Powell's end-of-semester speech about living your best life might inspire some to make a few personal adjustments. You're going to need a really great jacket for one… **JANE CROWTHER**

'Unapologetically commercial and fun, *Hit Man* also offers a dose of wish fulfilment via a delightful screwball tone that harks back to the late 90s'

THE VERDICT Fizzy, funny, heightened – *Hit Man* is a damn good use of two hours that will leave you buzzing. It won't win awards, but it will increase thirst for Powell.

STING 15 TBC

Dark web...

★★★☆☆ **OUT 31 MAY** CINEMAS

Like *E.T.* gone wrong, director Kiah Roache-Turner's underdeveloped but briskly suspenseful arachno-shocker sees a kid with family issues find solace in alien company. Only this spidery E.T. will gobble you up before it phones home...

A clever opening sees a chunk of meteorite crash through the window of a New York apartment block, land in a doll's house and crack open to release spidey. Prone to scuttling through air ducts, pre-teen Charlotte (a likeable Alyla Browne) finds it, feeds it and names it 'Sting', after Bilbo's dagger. But this critter grows fast – and soon uses the air ducts itself to hunt (human) food.

Alien's influence resonates, wittily so when the shadowy environs tease hidden threats. A Ripley/xenomorph-ish congruity is also implied between girl/spider, though as Sting's victims mount, Charlotte realises this home ain't big enough for the both of them.

Sam Raimi echoes also haunt Roache-Turner's dark wit and fluent camerawork, which makes immersive use of the contained settings. Often, though, Sting can seem limited rather than lean: the spider's growth spurts, gooey kills and voice-mimic skills could have been more inventively nurtured. Yet there's another sting in the tale. As Charlotte channels Ripley/*Evil Dead II*'s Ash for the close, facing down all that adolescence throws at her, her coming-of-age arc takes up at least some of the slack. **KEVIN HARLEY**

THE VERDICT Eight-legged eeks are unleashed in a playful rites-of-passage creature feature with flashes of bite and style.

At last, a fail-safe way to stop someone snoring

The quest to find David Attenborough's successor was finally over

SASQUATCH SUNSET 15

Entering beast mode...

★★★★☆ **OUT 14 JUNE** CINEMAS

Imagine if the monkey business at the start of *2001: A Space Odyssey* carried on for the whole film. Such is the deal in *Sasquatch Sunset*, an absurdist comedy by fraternal filmmaking duo David and Nathan Zellner. Only instead of actors in ape suits we have actors in Bigfoot suits, living out a year in the North American wilderness.

As the seasons pass, we follow a female Sasquatch (Riley Keough) and three males (Jesse Eisenberg, Nathan Zellner, Christophe Zajac-Denek) as they forage, groom, play, tussle and interact with other (real) animals. Boring? Not for a second. The unrecognisable actors work wonders under excellent prosthetics, while an ever-present air of mystery and menace pervades the sun-soaked, scenic visuals of DoP Mike Gioulakis (*It Follows*, *Us*).

The concept might be eccentric – there's zero dialogue, only grunts, huffs and yelps – and there are gross-out gags aplenty, including much farting and scratching/sniffing of crotches. But it's all played with admirable sincerity. Are we in prehistoric times? Is it post-apocalypse? And will the Sasquatch family eventually encounter humans amid these vast forests and soaring mountains?

As time passes, a real sadness creeps in as we suspect we might be witnessing the extinction of a species, though an inspired sight gag is never far away. This is a film that needs to be seen to be believed. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

THE VERDICT There have been many Bigfoot films but this is the best sighting yet. Spread the word.

BLUE FINCH, IGON, PICTUREHOUSE, SECOND SIGHT, SKY, STUDIOCANAL, VERTIGO

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

FREUD'S LAST SESSION TBC

★★☆☆☆ **OUT 14 JUNE** CINEMAS

Adapted from Mark St. Germain's play, Matthew Brown's stodgy drama stages a fictionalised meeting between a cancer-stricken Sigmund Freud (Anthony Hopkins) and a young C.S. Lewis (Matthew Goode). Shaky accent aside, Hopkins is good value as the cantankerous psychoanalyst, while Goode slips smoothly between self-satisfied and haunted as World War Two's arrival triggers his own frontline horrors. But Brown stifles the debate with needless flashbacks and asides, and as such, the philosophical sparring lacks a knockout punch. **CHRIS SCHILLING**

THE COFFEE TABLE TBC

★★★★★ **OUT NOW** DIGITAL

A humble coffee table becomes a monument to a family's downfall in this nihilistic farce by Spanish director Caye Casas (2017's *Killing God*). Already going through a rough patch, new parents Jesús (David Pareja) and Maria (Estefanía de los Santos) reach crisis point when they clash over the contentious furniture item in question. The ensuing tragedy is played like a perverse joke, demolishing the boundaries of good taste, then stomping the remnants into a bloody pulp on the rug. A devastatingly cruel comedy of horrors that's not for the faint-hearted or easily offended. **JOEL HARLEY**

IN FLAMES 15

★★★☆☆ **OUT 24 MAY** CINEMAS

Modern-day Pakistan's patriarchal society is viewed through the lens of psychological horror in this bold and unusual take from first-time writer-director Zarrar Khan. The focus rests on Fariha (Bakhtawar Mazhar) and her daughter Mariam (Ramesha Nawal), with the latter undergoing radical change after a tragic accident befalls her and Asad (Omar Javaid), a fellow student who's taken a shine to her. Exploring themes of mental breakdown and male oppression, Khan's film has some shocking moments – an assault in a car in particular – but its increasingly opaque nature frustrates. **JAMES MOTTRAM**

BONUS TRACK TBC

★★★☆☆ **OUT 1 JUNE**

SKY CINEMA, NOW

There's something of Bill Forsyth's 1980 classic *Gregory's Girl* in the charmingly lo-fi visuals, social awkwardness and inherently sweet nature of Julia Jackman's debut. Set in 2006, it centres on shy, glum George (Joe Anders), whose only passion is music – at least until Max (Samuel Paul Small), the cool son of a pop star, enrols in his year at school. The trajectory is rote, leading up to a climactic end-of-year talent contest, but the leads are charming and there's a pleasingly, ahem, old-school vibe to the whole affair. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

ROSALIE 15

Portrait of a bearded lady...

★★★★☆ **OUT 7 JUNE** CINEMAS

Loosely inspired by the story of late-19th-century bearded lady Clémentine Delait, the second feature by Stéphanie Di Giusto (2016's *The Dancer*) is a finely etched drama set in 1870s northern France. It begins as injured ex-soldier-turned-café-owner Abel (Benoît Magimel) meets and marries the younger Rosalie (Nadia Tereszkiewicz) – chiefly because her father provides a dowry that'll help settle his debts to local factory owner Barcelin (Benjamin Biolay).

Then Abel discovers that Rosalie, secretly, has hair across her chest and back; appalled, he refuses to consummate their marriage. But things change when she reveals her ability to grow a beard to the café customers, who are soon entranced by this girl and her strawberry-blonde whiskers. Gradually, Abel changes his tune, although there are others in the community, including Barcelin, who are less keen on her presence – which is when the dramatic fireworks really start to fly.

Exploring issues of female beauty, agency and courage, Di Giusto and her co-writers Sandrine le Coustumer and Alexandra Echkenazi also manage to craft a sensitive and beautiful love story. Leading the way is Tereszkiewicz, who is marvellous as the spirited Rosalie, although Magimel (following his sharp turn in *The Taste of Things*) provides real emotional ballast. Deftly shot and designed – the costumes are especially resplendent – it's a potent period piece that'll leave you charmed.

JAMES MOTTRAM

THE VERDICT Driven by fine performances from Magimel and Tereszkiewicz, this is a subtle, elegant and stirring work.

'Hmm, maybe a deerstalker would've topped this raffish combo off better...'

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED

MEEK'S CUTOFF
2010
Kelly Reichardt's feminist western rewrites the genre's rules.

PHANTOM THREAD
2017
Daniel Day-Lewis' exquisite on-screen swansong is matched by Krieps' breakout turn.

FALLING
2020
Mortensen's directorial debut proves he's as intense behind the camera as in front of it.

For more reviews visit gamesradar.com/totalfilm

THE DEAD DON'T HURT 15

Viggo west...

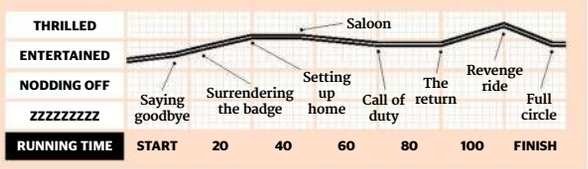
★★★★★ **OUT 7 JUNE** CINEMAS

DIRECTOR Viggo Mortensen **STARRING** Vicky Krieps, Viggo Mortensen, Solly McLeod, Garret Dillahunt, Colin Morgan **SCREENPLAY** Viggo Mortensen **DISTRIBUTOR** Signature Entertainment **RUNNING TIME** 129 mins

Set in 1860s Nevada, Viggo Mortensen's sophomore feature as writer/director is a western with all the trappings you'd expect: wide-brimmed hats, swinging saloon doors, six-shooters... But it also offers a degree of sensitivity you wouldn't so readily associate with the genre. This duality is laid bare at the start, when we witness the last gasps of Vicky Krieps' Vivienne, who's dreaming of a knight on horseback (a poetic touch that returns, effectively, throughout the film).

Meanwhile, a man in a long black coat shoots up a bar before fleeing. An absence of justice sees Sheriff Olsen (Mortensen) turn in his badge and leave town with his young son.

FILM PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



Both parts comprise an effective opener that gets you invested, before Mortensen takes a more leisurely, dual-timelined approach to lay out the lead-up to and fallout from these incidents. Most of the runtime concerns what came before, as we follow French-Canadian Vivienne from her childhood to her emigration to America. There she meets Danish immigrant Olsen in San Francisco, before they head to his spartan Nevada homestead.

Mortensen's movie is more love story on the range than a lawman vs blackhat revenge western. Krieps is excellent as the resourceful Vivienne, who holds the fort while Olsen enlists to fight for the Union in the Civil War. This forging of a relationship, and a home, is quietly compelling, and there's a tenderness that prevents things from ever feeling too grim.

The production design and costumes are immaculate, and like the landscapes, beautifully shot by cinematographer Marcel Zyskind. Some of the dialogue sounds a little ripe, a bit western 101, while the aforementioned blackhat, Solly McLeod's Weston Jeffries (the son of a prominent corrupt local), is a pretty one-note villain. You root for the varmint to get his due, but a modicum of nuance wouldn't have gone amiss.

Still, *TDDH* is a welcome spin on a once-dominant genre that now struggles for oxygen. It's also less brutal a viewing experience than Mortensen's punishing directorial debut *Falling* (2020), with plenty of shoots of hope, and an abundance of natural beauty. Olsen – for the short time he's in the post – is an atypical sheriff, exhibiting dignity, quiet authority and restraint. You get the impression that Mortensen would do a similarly fine job in real life, if he were handed a hat and badge.

MATT MAYTUM

THE VERDICT Krieps is formidable in Viggo Mortensen's gritty but beautiful frontier tale that subverts western tropes as readily as it embraces them.

BFI, ICON, KALEIDOSCOPE, METFILM, SIGNATURE, VERTIGO

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

The 'most swan-like neck' competition was hotting up

THE BEAST 15

Wild times...

★★★☆☆ **OUT 31 MAY** CINEMAS

Spanning two continents, three eras and who knows how many genres, this unwieldy sci-fi drama from French auteur Bertrand Bonello (*Nocturama*) fully commits to its title. Loosely inspired by a 1903 Henry James novella, it stars Léa Seydoux and George MacKay as two people whose paths keep crossing through the ages.

In Paris, 1910, she's a pianist, he's her suitor; in LA, 2014, she's an actor/model, he's her stalker; and in an unspecified location in 2044, she undergoes a mysterious procedure to purify her DNA – the reason, perhaps, for all the time-shifting. In each period there are common elements: pigeons recur, as do clairvoyants, nightclubs, dolls and works of art such as *Madame Butterfly*. And throughout, Seydoux's character is terrified of an unspecified disaster: the eponymous beast. So we experience a flooded Paris and an LA earthquake and hear of an off-screen Armageddon averted by AI. It is, to use 2024 parlance, a lot.

Seydoux is reliably luminous in a demanding role, but MacKay seems a little rudderless. There are some stunning moments, such as the eerily green-screened opener, and an unsettling underwater sequence up there with the renowned sequence in Dario Argento's *Inferno*. But after 145 increasingly indulgent minutes, you may find yourself agreeing with one character's assessment of a piece of classical music: 'It's very inventive, but it's hard to find emotion in it.' **MATT GLASBY**

THE VERDICT An elegant, elliptical film that's equal parts impressive and infuriating.

RIDDLE OF FIRE 12A

★★★☆☆ **OUT NOW** ICON FILM CHANNEL **7 JUNE** CINEMAS

A trio of scampish kids set the all-over-the-place pace for writer/director Weston Razooli's winningly distinct, if wayward, feature debut. In Wyoming, a poorly mum tasks her three BMX-riding charges to fetch a blueberry pie; in return, they'll get the TV password so they can play their (ahem, stolen) game. The quest unfolds like an Americana fairy tale, involving witches and a 'woodsy bastard' who steals the kids' speckled egg. The unruly plot stretches patience, but it's hard to deny Razooli's *Goonies*-ish commitment to the kids' over-excitable POV. **KEVIN HARLEY**

WILDING PG

★★★☆☆ **OUT 14 JUNE** CINEMAS

Award-winning nature-film maestro David Allen turns this leisurely, animal-packed account of Isabella Tree and Charlie Burrell's 20-year rewilding project into a gentle, golden-lit hymn to conservation. Beetles scuttle, Tamworth pigs learn to swim and wild Exmoor ponies crash a polo match, as the Kent couple wrestle their pesticide-drenched failure of a farm in West Sussex into an untamed haven. Limpidly gorgeous rather than engaging, this documentary lacks grabby characters (unlike 2018's similar *The Biggest Little Farm*) and needs more jeopardy than a creeping thistle invasion. **KATE STABLES**

ÀMA GLORIA 12A

★★★★☆ **OUT 14 JUNE** CINEMAS

Spirited six-year-old Cléo (Louise Mauroy-Panzani) lives in Paris and worships her Cape Verdean nanny Gloria (Ilça Moreno Zego). But the latter has bombshell news for her young charge: she is returning for good to her West African island home. Drawing on her own childhood experiences, French writer/director Marie Amachoukeli delivers a heartfelt melodrama. Hand-crafted animated sequences are deftly incorporated into the rites-of-passage narrative, but what really distinguishes the film is the exceptional Mauroy-Panzani, who vividly conveys the intensity of Cléo's fluctuating feelings. **TOM DAWSON**

CABRINI 12

★★☆☆☆ **OUT 27 MAY** DVD, BD, DIGITAL

The life and good works of Mother Francesca Cabrini, an Italian nun who brought housing and healthcare to the slums of 19th-century New York, are dramatised in a handsomely sepia-toned but rather pious biopic. Director Alejandro Monteverde spends an indulgent two hours eulogising our dogged hero (well played, nonetheless, by Cristiana Dell'Anna) as she battles penury, prejudice and John Lithgow's heartless mayor. But where Monteverde's last film *Sound of Freedom* became a magnet for controversy, this one is more likely to slip under the radar. **NEIL SMITH**

More of a purple, surely?

IF U

Less than meets the eye...

★★☆☆☆ **OUT NOW** CINEMAS

Warm and well-intentioned but frankly sappy, John Krasinski's ode to childhood fantasy centres on Bea (Cailey Fleming), a tween who lost her mother in early childhood and is now bravely facing her father's upcoming heart surgery.

As if that weren't enough to deal with, quirky characters that apparently only Bea can see (like Phoebe Waller-Bridge's creepy ant-girl Blossom) start making trouble around her. A possible solution arises when grumpy, wisecracking neighbour Cal (Ryan Reynolds) – who shares Bea's ability – co-opts her into matchmaking the needy IFs (Imaginary Friends) with new kids to replace their grown ones.

With its big, bumbling, *Monsters, Inc.* lookalike Blue (voiced by Steve Carell), *IF* badly wants to be a live-action Pixar movie, but its creaky, CGI-augmented world-building isn't smart or cohesive enough. The sluggish story doesn't help either, as Bea auditions clunkily adorable IFs in a blink/miss set of starry cameos (Damon, Clooney, Schumer, innumerable others) that decorate rather than drive the narrative.

By the time we've discovered that adults also need IFs to help them in tough times (Fiona Shaw's quaint Irish granny assists here), the film has become a rather soppy hymn to the power of imagination. *IF* is obviously aiming to be an *E.T.*-style family classic about kids and creatures on a healing journey. But its sticky sentimentality keeps it mawkish rather than magical. **KATE STABLES**

THE VERDICT A celebration of fantasy friends, Krasinski's twee tale is long on imagination, but sadly short on ingenuity.

WILLIAM SHATNER: YOU CAN CALL ME BILL 12

Kirk experience...

★★★★☆ **OUT 27 MAY** BD, DIGITAL

For a documentarian who has tackled Hitchcock (*78/52*), David Lynch (*Lynch/Oz*) and William Friedkin (*Leap of Faith*), the man who gave us James T. Kirk, T.J. Hooker and a spoken-word rendition of *Rocket Man* might not seem as weighty a subject. But in *You Can Call Me Bill*, essayist Alexandre O. Philippe magnanimously affords the nonagenarian Shatner the respect he'd grant any cinematic titan.

Born in Montreal in 1931, Shatner grew up idolising Laurence Olivier and once fancied himself a Canadian Brando. Life, though, had other ideas, directing the actor down a campier path better suited to his declarative style. *Star Trek* inevitably features heavily here, with clips including the disquieting sight of Kirk in a Nazi uniform. Yet Philippe appears more intrigued by the ways 'The Shat' used the fame *Trek* gave him: by becoming a brand ambassador, for example, or by morphing into a passionate environmental advocate.

Bill is the doc's lone talking head and is allowed to waffle on philosophically in a manner that's both engaging and faintly preposterous. For all that, it's hard not to warm to a guy who was once so lonely he sent valentine cards to himself. His emotional reaction, meanwhile, to boldly going to space for real on Jeff Bezos' *New Shepard 4* is only too… human. **NEIL SMITH**

THE VERDICT An insightful portrait that's impishly cognisant of the niche Shatner occupies in the pop-culture firmament.

'It's life, Ned, but not as we know it...'

CURZON, NETFLIX, NEW WAVE, PARAMOUNT, PEGCADILLO, SHUDDER, SIGNATURE

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

HERE TBC

★★★☆☆ **OUT 7 JUNE** CINEMAS

Over a summer weekend in Brussels, two immigrants cross paths. The sensitive Stefan (Stefan Gota) is a construction worker who's on the brink of returning home to Romania for his holidays. Shuxiu (Liyo Gong), meanwhile, is a Belgian-Chinese botanist who specialises in the study of mosses and lichen. Written and directed by Bas Devos, *Here* is a delicate and meditative piece of filmmaking. Shot on 16mm and in the boxy Academy ratio, it encourages viewers to dwell upon the Edenic images of the natural world it conjures in bracing contrast to its city views. **TOM DAWSON**

A HOUSE IN JERUSALEM 12A

★★★★☆ **OUT 31 MAY** CINEMAS

A supernatural family drama that feels especially resonant given the current turmoil in the Middle East. Muayad Alayan's thoughtful tale stars Johnny Harris as Michael, a British father who brings his 10-year-old daughter Rebecca (Miley Locke) to West Jerusalem as he looks to make a fresh start following the death of his wife. But when Rebecca encounters the spirit of young girl Rasha (Sheherazade Makhoul Farrell), it's only the start of the strangeness in a film that folds ghosts and grief into a political story about the seemingly ceaseless Israel-Palestine conflict. **JAMES MOTTRAM**

HOUNDS 15

★★★☆☆ **OUT 14 JUNE** CINEMAS

We're a long way from Rick's café in this grittily atmospheric, Casablanca-set crime movie, written and directed by Moroccan first-time filmmaker Kamal Lazraq. Set over a chaotic 24 hours in the city's rundown suburbs, this darkly amusing tale follows superstitious petty criminal Hassan (Abdellatif Masstouri) and his adult son Issam (Ayoub Elaid), who have been ordered by a local mobster to dispose of a corpse. Unfolding in a brutal, dog-eat-dog underworld, *Hounds* runs out of steam in its second half, but there are credible turns from the mainly non-professional cast. **TOM DAWSON**

STOPMOTION 18

★★★★☆ **OUT 31 MAY** SHUDDER

Playing like some unholy mash-up of *Eraserhead*, *Censor* and *Morph*, Robert Morgan's audacious, disturbing debut sees stop-motion animator Ella (Aisling Franciosi, *God's Creatures*) lose her mind as she digs into psyche and soul to complete her new film, in which a puppet girl is stalked by a grotesque man-monster. Soon Ella is sourcing real flesh to fashion her meat-puppet hero, and fantasy bleeds into reality as film and film-within-a-film meld. In movies, the creative process is often presented as traumatic; here, it's psychopathic. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

Tony was very unhappy about his missing toy

UNFROSTED 12

Tart-house cinema...

★★★★☆ **OUT NOW** NETFLIX

As packed with yuks as a Pop-Tart is with fruit-adjacent filling, Jerry Seinfeld's wacky, pastel-coloured comedy turns the sorta-true story of the 1963 Kellogg's/Post Foods 'boxed breakfast pastry' wars into a hilarious, *The Right Stuff*-styled battle to be the titan of toaster treats.

Taking on the ruthless Marjorie Post (Amy Schumer), wily Kellogg's marketing exec Bob Cabana (Seinfeld) and freewheeling food tech Donna 'Stan' Stankowski (Melissa McCarthy) assemble an eccentric team of Taste Pilots, whose exploding/disgusting/downright creepy inventions splatter the film with sight gags.

A knowing twist on the 'product origin story' trend that brought us *Air*, *Flamin' Hot*, *Blackberry* et al, it's unashamedly a gags-first film, rather than an *Anchorman*-esque absurdist parody. So the mad rush to see how many jokes, pastiches and celebrity cameos it can pack in (there's a terrific *Mad Man* interlude) produces a periodically frantic feel, amped up by the many 60s hits on the soundtrack.

Lovers of TV classic *Seinfeld* will spot traces of Jerry's wisecracking deadpan in Bob. But otherwise big, broad performances (like Hugh Grant's turn as an actorish, mascot-revolt-inciting Tony the Tiger) are the order of the day. And throughout, first-time director Seinfeld's assured touch keeps the story popping like a hot breakfast treat, including a shot-for-shot *Apollo 13* toaster take-off. **KATE STABLES**

THE VERDICT A deliciously silly, spoofy tale of the 60s battle for breakfast domination, filled with high-fructose fun.

'Chimp chiminey, chimp chiminey, chimp chimp cher-ee!'

KINGDOM OF THE PLANET OF THE APES 12A

Hair to the throne...

★★★☆☆ **OUT NOW** CINEMAS

Is there life after Caesar? That's the question for Wes Ball's franchise restart, tasked as it is with following one of the strongest fantasy trilogies of recent times, albeit without Andy Serkis' pivotal character.

Set 'many generations' after 2017's *War...*, *KotPotA* takes place on an ape-ruled planet that's largely forgotten Caesar's teachings. Yet as much as young chimpanzee Noa (Owen Teague) would like to live his life in eagle-rearing ignorance, he can't prevent the outside world from paying him a visit that ends in catastrophe.

The apes have come a long way since 2011's *Rise...*, not just in guile, but in the mo-cap used to bring them to life. Yet on the storytelling front, *Kingdom* is a bit of a regression. Noa's quest to liberate his tribe has a generic rites-of-passage quality – until, that is, Kevin Durand's Proximus Caesar arrives, at which point *KotPotA* adopts an old-school Bond vibe. There's even a secret lair to be infiltrated in the second half, plus a right-hand woman in the form of Freya Allan's capable Mae.

Try as he might, alas, Teague just isn't as compelling as Serkis in a sequel that lacks the Caesar trilogy's grand thematic sweep. And while the vision of a California overtaken by foliage dazzles, there's not enough that's fresh here to make you salivate for the future instalments the ending invites. **NEIL SMITH**

THE VERDICT *Kingdom* offers spectacle and thrills, but lacks the ambition, smarts and gravity of its immediate predecessors.

SLOW TBC

★★★★☆ **OUT 24 MAY** CINEMAS

A sweetly tender Lithuanian love story with a difference, this Sundance favourite sticks to dancer Elena (Greta Grineviciute) and sign-language interpreter Dovydas (Kęstutis Cicenas) like a second skin, as they attempt to combine their big love with a non-typical sexuality. Director Marija Kavtaradze's romantically grainy shots, complex characters and body-conscious filming style let intense performances from the leads work up a giddy, volatile romance. The leisurely pace sometimes earns *Slow* its title, yet this is a film that manages to embrace intimacy while avoiding voyeurism. **KATE STABLES**

BLACK STONE 15

★★★★☆ **OUT NOW** CINEMAS

10 JUNE DIGITAL

In this award-winning debut by Greek writer/director Spiros Jacovides, a documentary crew gatecrashes the house of Haroula (Eleni Kokkidou) to look for her missing son Panos (Ahilleas Hariskos), a civil servant accused of fraud. The mockumentary format brings a DIY energy to the chronicling of the quest, which is mainly mined for absurdist humour but sprinkled with earnest emotion: Kokkidou switches gears effortlessly. And when Black taxi driver Michalis (Kevin Zans Ansong) joins the search, Jacovides slyly skewers the casual racism that he meets daily. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

SORCERY 15

★★★☆☆ **OUT 14 JUNE** CINEMAS

A bizarre true story from 1880s Chile provides the basis for this eerie fable about an Indigenous teen (Valentina Véliz Caileo) who turns to her island's secret sect of sorcerers after her father is murdered by a German Christian settler (Sebastian Hülk). Steeped in unsettling atmosphere and Herzogian visuals, Christopher Murray's film pits native traditions against the violent forces of colonialism to compelling if elusive effect. He's helped by Leonardo Heiblum's spooky string-based score and a riveting turn from Caileo that bristles with righteous umbrage. **NEIL SMITH**

BERMONDSEY TALES: FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE 18

★★☆☆☆ **OUT NOW** CINEMAS

10 JUNE DVD, BD, DIGITAL

'All Londoners and criminals love a good story,' says one character in this low-budget, Guy Ritchie-knock-off anthology starring lots of small-screen cockneys plus John Hannah and Vicki Michelle ('Oh, René!'). Written, directed and led with gusto by Michael Head, it follows the comically violent escapades of a south-London firm. Enjoyment will depend largely on your tolerance for men scrapping and shouting 'You slag!', antiquated rhyming slang and the clear limitations of a meagre budget. **JANE CROWTHER**

20TH CENTURY STUDIOS, CONIC, STUDIO SOHO, SOVEREIGN, KALEIDOSCOPE, LIGHTBULB, MUBI, THE MOVIE PARTNERSHIP, VERTIGO, SIGNATURE

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

A FAMILY AFFAIR 15

★★☆☆☆ **OUT NOW** DIGITAL

As the bank threatens foreclosure on the spiritual retreat owned by Edward (Joe Wilkinson) and Helen (Laura Aikman), their parents arrive for a getaway, and various potential buyers descend to purchase the country manor in an auction. Complications and romantic entanglements naturally ensue – no gong bath can cleanse the rampant lust and greed on display – and farcical scenarios arise, like Edward's father popping Viagra to bed his gold-digging caregiver. One-part Renoir's *The Rules of the Game*, two-parts John Cleese/Rowan Atkinson-style Brit-com, and almost entirely flat. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

GASOLINE RAINBOW

TBC

★★★★☆ **OUT 31 MAY** MUBI

Written, directed, lensed and edited by sibling filmmakers Bill and Turner Ross (2020's *Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets*), this road-trip movie sees five high-school leavers from an unnamed Oregon town embark on a spur-of-the-moment 500-mile journey to the Pacific coast. Impressively acted by the entirely non-professional cast, who improvise much of their dialogue, *Gasoline Rainbow* is marked by unexpected encounters, spontaneous moments of joy and the heartening kindness with which these resilient teenagers treat one another on their epic, intimate travels. **TOM DAWSON**

THE PRESENT PG TBC

★★☆☆☆ **OUT 24 MAY** CINEMAS

This time-travelling comedy adventure follows three precocious children as they attempt to prevent their parents' impending divorce. The twist in this low-stakes *Groundhog Day* is that each reset of the clock follows a different family member, from youngest sibling Taylor (Easton Rocket Sweda) to mum and dad (played, respectively, by Isla Fisher and Greg Kinnear). Like the kids, director Christian Ditter has good intentions, but the repetitive structure soon grates, and the time-travel hook is underutilised. The sickly sweet resolution, meanwhile, makes you wish they hadn't bothered. **JOEL HARLEY**

NEW LIFE TBC

★★★★☆ **OUT 3 JUNE** DIGITAL

Aiming to update David Cronenberg's 1970s output (*Shivers*, *Rabid*) for the COVID-19 generation and – at times – succeeding, writer/director John Rosman's debut is impressive stuff. Jessica Murdock (Hayley Erin) is a young woman on the run through small-town America; Elsa Gray (Sonya Walger) is a mysterious operative who must find her before her own time runs out. If the reasons for their actions are revealed a little clumsily, the manner in which scenes of thoughtful drama explode into bouts of sudden shrieking body horror will keep you hooked to the end. **MATT GLASBY**

Chris Pine's stoner comedy mystery sinks like the proverbial

POOLMAN 15

Water mess...

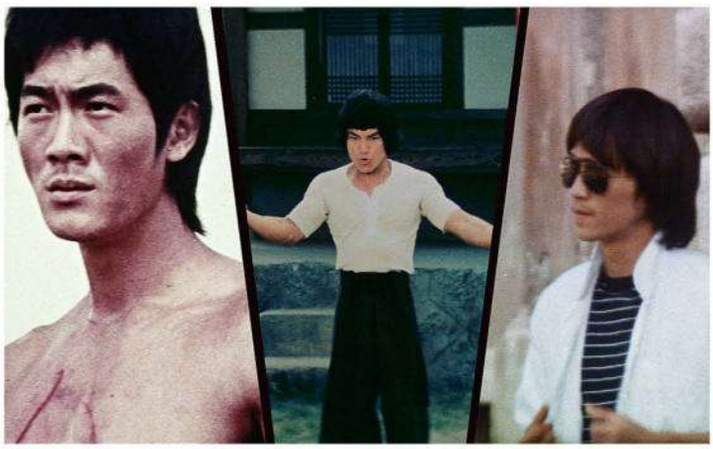
★☆☆☆☆ **OUT 7 JUNE** PRIME VIDEO

There are two big questions at the centre of this terminally kooky noir, which debuted to a shocking reception at 2023's Toronto International Film Festival. The first: how has Chris Pine's directorial debut – which he also stars in, as well as co-writing and producing – ended up such a spectacular folly? The second: how did he rope in such a great cast?

Pine plays 'poolman' Darren Barrenman (or DB), whose main focus is cleaning the pool in the trailer park where he lives. He also receives Jungian therapy from neighbour Dianne (Annette Bening); the latter and her husband Jack (Danny DeVito) are basically DB's substitute parents. When DB gets a tip-off about a conspiracy that affects his beloved LA, he turns amateur sleuth and sets off on a painfully unengaging mission.

Poolman doesn't work on any level. The tone is all over the place, jokes fall flat and the central mystery is barely coherent. It doesn't help that the film repeatedly namechecks *Chinatown*, or that Pine also seems to be trying to harness some of *The Big Lebowski*'s energy. Given that inspiration, the least you can say for the film is that it's clearly targeting a surreal, stoner vibe. But even cutting it that slack, there's barely anything here to recommend. So if the harsh reviews tempt you to masochistically seek out *Poolman* for a laugh/endurance test, forget it: this is absolutely not *Chinatown*. **MATT MAYTUM**

THE VERDICT Chris Pine's directorial debut is a copper-bottomed misfire. Do yourself (and everyone involved) a favour by rewatching *The Big Lebowski* instead.



Real deal? Take your pick of Bruce Lee impersonators

ENTER THE CLONES OF BRUCE 15

Game of life after death...

★★★★★ **OUT NOW** DIGITAL **27 MAY** BD
EXTRAS ★★★★★ Commentary, Featurettes, Outtakes

When Bruce Lee died in 1973, aged only 32, the star was at the height of his popularity. Wowed by posthumous hit *Enter the Dragon*, audiences were left clamouring for more Bruce, leaving studios with a void to fill... and fast.

Documentarian David Gregory explores the so-called 'Brucesploitation' craze that followed the actor's death, tracking down the impersonators who were hired to star in the rip-offs and pseudo-sequels to his work, each purporting to be the real-ish thing, or as good as. All the surviving Bruces, from Bruce Li to Bruce Le, reflect on their time in the industry, working on such titles as *Re-enter the Dragon* and *The True Game of Death* (both 1979).

The rush to cash in on a beloved star's passing still leaves a sour taste in the mouth, but this upbeat documentary homes in on the more comical lengths studio heads would go to in order to keep their moneymaker 'alive' and earning. As for the Bruces, they give insightful commentary on a career in mimicry, revealing genuine passion for their craft. Along the way, Gregory also takes in Lee's successors (Jackie Chan film clips, an interview with Sammo Hung). *Enter the Clones...* reinforces something we already knew to be true – there's only one Bruce Lee – but it's not all that's learned. **JOEL HARLEY**

THE VERDICT Gregory's lively documentary celebrates Lee's incredible legacy via the accomplishments of his imitators.

NEXT SOHEE TBC

★★★★★ **OUT 14 JUNE** CINEMAS

July Jung's sombre, penetrating drama puts exploitative corporate practices under the microscope. Its opening hour follows ebullient teenager Sohee (a captivating Kim Si-eun), whose gruelling work placement at a telecom call centre ends in tragedy; the second half shifts focus to a stoic detective (Doona Bae, compellingly understated) investigating the dehumanising conditions that caused it. As a string of blame-shifting officials refuse to take responsibility, Jung's film assumes the quality of a Loachian polemic – its simmering rage eddying into heartbreak for an intensely moving final shot. **CHRIS SCHILLING**

LITTLE MONSTERS PG

★★★★★ **OUT 31 MAY** CINEMAS

Not to be confused with 2019's Lupita Nyong'o zom-com, this Russian-made, English-dubbed animation imagines a world where every home comes with its own invisible do-gooding furball. All bar one: a dilapidated dwelling in the town of Berg whose resident 'Finn' is a human-hating curmudgeon. What will happen when a new family arrives and his presence is rumbled by their crime-obsessed 13-year-old daughter? Nothing particularly interesting, alas, in a wholesale knock-off of Pixar tropes that's hardly worth the two years it took to surface on our shores. **NEIL SMITH**

PANDEMONIUM 18

★★★★★ **OUT 27 MAY** ARROW

'Humanity is evil by nature and must atone for its sins,' says the monstrous psychopomp that escorts the freshly deceased Nathan (Hugo Dillon) to Hell, where he must suffer for eternity. If the episodic structure of *Pandemonium* (each corpse that litters the underworld possesses a devilish backstory) is misshapen, it's aptly so, and there's a real power to the chilled, sulphurous visuals wrought by French filmmaker Quarxx. The creature design rocks, while slivers of sly humour never undercut the commitment to a resoundingly bleak scenario. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

TREASURE TBC

★★★★★ **OUT 14 JUNE** CINEMAS

A curiously cast Stephen Fry and Lena Dunham are father and daughter in writer/director Julia von Heinz's take on Lily Brett's book *Too Many Men*. A road movie of sorts set in 1990s Poland, it sees Fry's Auschwitz survivor Edek Rothwax and Dunham's music journo Ruth set out to tour his origins, as well as journey to the notorious concentration camp. Fry's Polish speaking impresses, but the bickering parent-child dynamic wears thin, while Dunham's *Girls*-lite angst-ridden character feels like a puzzle piece that doesn't quite fit the story. Result? Alas, a zone of low interest. **JAMES MOTTRAM**

SEVERIN, ELYSIAN, DAY FOR NIGHT, DAZZLER, ARROW

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

THE MATRIX 15

One of a kind...

1999 ★★★★★ **OUT 7 JUNE** CINEMAS

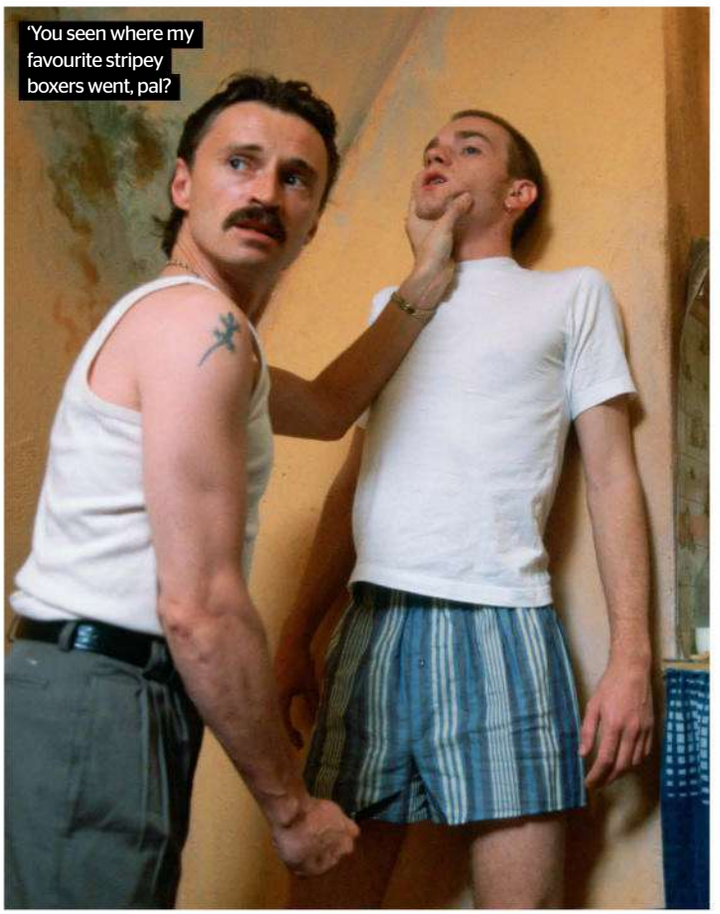
Neo (Keanu Reeves), fully embracing the concept of 'bullet time'

As with George Lucas' original Star Wars trilogy or Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, it's hard to overstate the impact of the Wachowskis' cyberpunk sci-fi action classic. Rereleased in cinemas to mark its 25th anniversary, *The Matrix* first arrived just as Lucas' *The Phantom Menace* was due, stealing some of that much-hyped prequel's thunder with its mind-frazzling notions of 'bullet time' and the Matrix itself, an all-powerful simulation used to pacify humans enslaved by an army of intelligent machines.

Blending subcultural conspiracy theories, postmodern philosophy (Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*), Lewis Carroll ('Tumbling down the rabbit hole…'), and Hong Kong cinema, this was the film that also revitalised Keanu Reeves' career: he's pure 'whoa' as Neo, the computer programmer-slash-chosen one guided by Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) to Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne), the rebel leader looking to unplug mankind from the Matrix. Also brilliant? Hugo Weaving as the suited, booted and relentless AI antagonist Agent Smith.

The leather coats, PVC catsuits and wraparound shades make a sleek fashion statement, but *The Matrix*'s most trailblazing moments remain the wire-work kung-fu fights and still-stunning bullet-time sequences, as Neo and co bend physics to avoid being sprayed with ammunition. About the only thing that dates the film? Those once cool-looking Nokia slide phones they all use… **JAMES MOTTRAM**

THE VERDICT A landmark work of modern sci-fi, still every bit as thrilling as the day it was released.


'You seen where my favourite stripey boxers went, pal?'

C4/FILM4, WARNER BROS.

TRAINSPOTTING 18

Boyle is back in town...

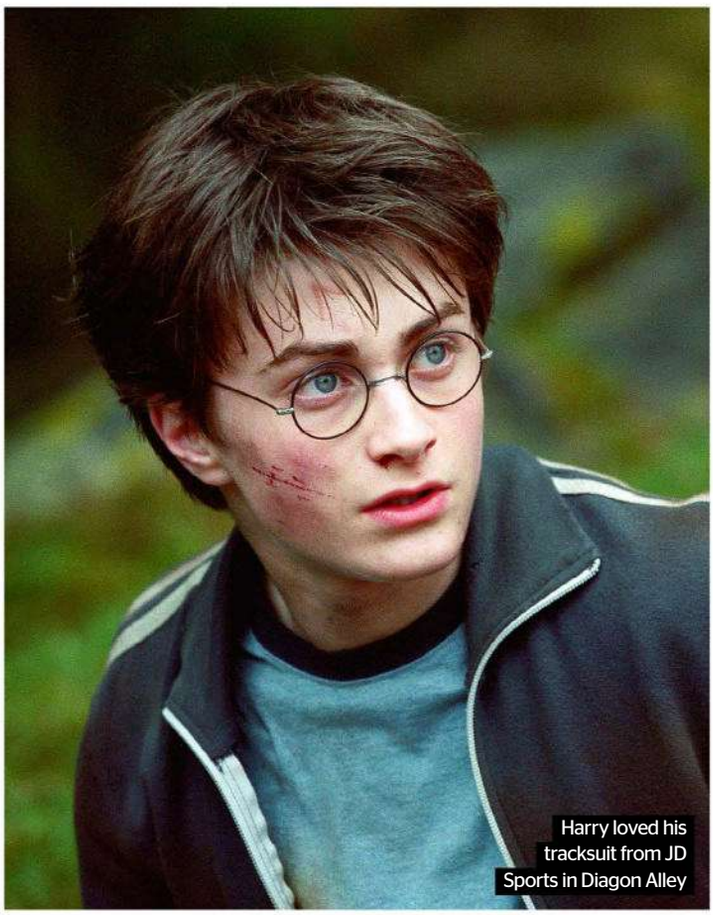
1996 ★★★★★ **OUT 24 MAY** CINEMAS

In 2017, Danny Boyle's Cool Britannia classic, based on Irvine Welsh's zeitgeist novel, was rereleased into cinemas just ahead of the long-awaited *T2 Trainspotting*. Back then, revisiting the 1996 movie's youthful exuberance, albeit peppered with crushing despair, only deepened the midlife crises on display in the belated sequel. Rewatching the OG movie now – it's again back in multiplexes, this time in 4K – the overwhelming feeling is relief: how we need its energetic swagger, anarchic attitude and scabrous humour in these desperate post-Brexit times.

The deal, as you know, is that Edinburgh junkie Renton (Ewan McGregor) is trying to kick skag and choose life. But it's not easy when your mates are Sick Boy (Jonny Lee Miller), Spud (Ewen Bremner) and the psychotic Begbie (Robert Carlyle). The action flip-flops between vertiginous highs and plummeting lows, grimy social realism and show-stopping fantasy, bilious belly laughs and gut-punch tragedy, all propelled by iconic needle drops (*Lust for Life*, *Born Slippy*, et al) and the kind of supercharged style you expect from Scorsese, not British cinema.

Trainspotting, in 1996, was a pop-culture phenomenon. It seemed that things must change. Yet it was followed by a wave of crap geezer-gangster flicks, while Scotland voted no to independence in 2014 ('We're ruled by effete arseholes,' Renton cries here). But the film itself? It remains sensational. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

THE VERDICT Choose *Trainspotting*. An all-timer Brit flick that's still the best work of everyone involved.


Harry loved his tracksuit from JD Sports in Diagon Alley

HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN PG

Time of the wolf...

2004 ★★★★★ **OUT 31 MAY** CINEMAS

Hogwarts found itself schooled in darker cinematic magic when Alfonso Cuarón took the directing job for year three. Murkier and chillier than the wizard larks of Chris Columbus' likeable but lighter opening entries, *Prisoner* takes flight like a reversed Dementor's kiss, adding soul (and style) to the saga.

You know the story: after too much teenage fiddling with his wand at home, Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe) returns to Hogwarts to find himself haunted by snarling prison escapee Sirius Black (Gary Oldman). It seems Black ratted on Harry's late parents to Voldemort – but what secrets await in the Shrieking Shack?

Oldman brings wild-eyed menace to proceedings, matched by Cuarón's stormy, noir-ish direction. The outdoor action broods under lowering skies; indoors, skewed angles and creeping camerawork ensure Hogwarts' corridors and stairwells plunge deeper than ever. Better still, Cuarón's empathy for puberty's rough road suits Harry's grief and Hermione's (Emma Watson) sighting of her hair from behind.

True, *Azkaban* suffers from too much fealty to J.K. Rowling's awkward, repetitive plotting in the end stretches: the Time-Turner is a liability. But Cuarón dimmed the way forward for the series without compromising its cosy warmth, a balance best embodied by David Thewlis, who steals the show effortlessly as moon-watching DADA teacher Lupin. **KEVIN HARLEY**

THE VERDICT Bringing tantalising touches of elegantly mounted evil to the Wizarding World, this is peak Potter.

TWO FILMS BY YASUJIRŌ OZU U

1932/42 ★★★★★ **OUT NOW** BD

EXTRAS ★★★★★ Commentaries, Booklet

A double bill of father-son tales (mums are either making meals or dead) from Japanese master Ozu, both deceptively simple, understated, warm and wise. The director also brings the LOLs with the silent *I Was Born, But...*, in which two charming brats struggle with issues of power and status at school and at home. Meanwhile, *There Was a Father* is bookended by tragedy and heartbreak, yet eschews melodrama as it tracks the tension and affection between a teacher and his only child across the decades. **MATTHEW LEYLAND**

THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT 15

1994 ★★★★★ **OUT 14 JUNE** CINEMAS

Stephan Elliott's road-trip comedy was a mainstream boundary-breaker for LGBTQ+ representation. It follows two drag queens (Guy Pearce and Hugo Weaving) and a transgender woman (Terence Stamp) as they take Priscilla (their tour bus) across the Aussie outback. The scorching desert vistas are beautifully stark, striking an exquisite contrast with the queens' extravagant frockery. Between rounds of sniping and snazzily choreographed musical numbers, a tale of friendship and acceptance emerges. **JOEL HARLEY**

BLACK MASK 18

1996 ★★★★★ **OUT NOW** BD

EXTRAS ★★★★★ Alternate cuts, Commentaries, Featurettes, Booklet

Universal Soldier meets Batman (with a dash of the Green Hornet chucked in for good measure) in this hyper-stylised Hong Kong superhero flick about a vigilante who's impervious to pain. As enjoyable as it is to watch star Jet Li leap around on wires, kicking bad guys in the face, *Black Mask*'s murky colour grading, breathless editing and over-reliance on skewed camera angles renders most of the action as incoherent as the half-baked story. The Blu-ray boasts four different cuts of the film; shame that there's not a good one among them. **ANTON VAN BEEK**

STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK PG

1984 ★★★★★ **OUT 27 MAY** 4K UHD **14 JUNE** CINEMAS

EXTRAS ★★★★★ Commentaries, Featurettes, Gallery, Storyboards

The odd-numbered films are the weaker ones, so the argument goes; and following up the franchise-best *Wrath of Khan* (1982) was never going to be easy. With star Leonard Nimoy taking the director's chair for the first time, the third Trek film sets about undoing the death of Spock via a clash with the Klingons. Forty years on, and remastered in 4K, it's aged well. A fun, if slight, swashbuckling sci-fi adventure, it coasts affably on the well-oiled interplay between its veteran cast. **JOEL HARLEY**

BFI, EUREKA, FABULOUS, MGM, PARAMOUNT, PARK CIRCUS, SECOND SIGHT, STUDIOCANAL, WARNER BROS.

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

CHOCOLAT 15

1988 ★★★★★ **OUT NOW** BD

EXTRAS ★★★★★ Commentary, Documentary, Featurette, Short, Booklet

Claire Denis' exploration of France's colonial past (*Beau Travail*, *White Material*) began with her quasi-autobiographical debut, in which a woman named France (Mireille Perrier) returns to Cameroon to visit the former outpost where she grew up, the only child of the only white family. Denis' gift for conjuring thick atmosphere and blending the political with the personal is on full display here. This lush BFI Blu treats *Chocolat* with due reverence: the 4K restoration is approved by Denis, who features strongly in the raft of extras. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS U

1949 ★★★★★ **OUT NOW** 4K UHD

EXTRAS ★★★★★ Commentaries, Intro, Featurettes, Alt ending, Galleries

The subversive heart of Ealing Studios' output is fully evident in Robert Hamer's dark masterpiece. Dennis Price shines as the serial killer attempting to murder his way to dukedom, while Alec Guinness showcases several scene-stealing turns playing Price's eight aristocratic victims. An acerbic and ruthlessly witty delight – one described in the extras by director Whit Stillman (*Love & Friendship*) as being 'more of a Wildean sort of film than the actual adaptations of Oscar Wilde plays we occasionally get'. **ANTON VAN BEEK**

THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE 18

1974 ★★★★★ **OUT 14 JUNE**

CINEMAS

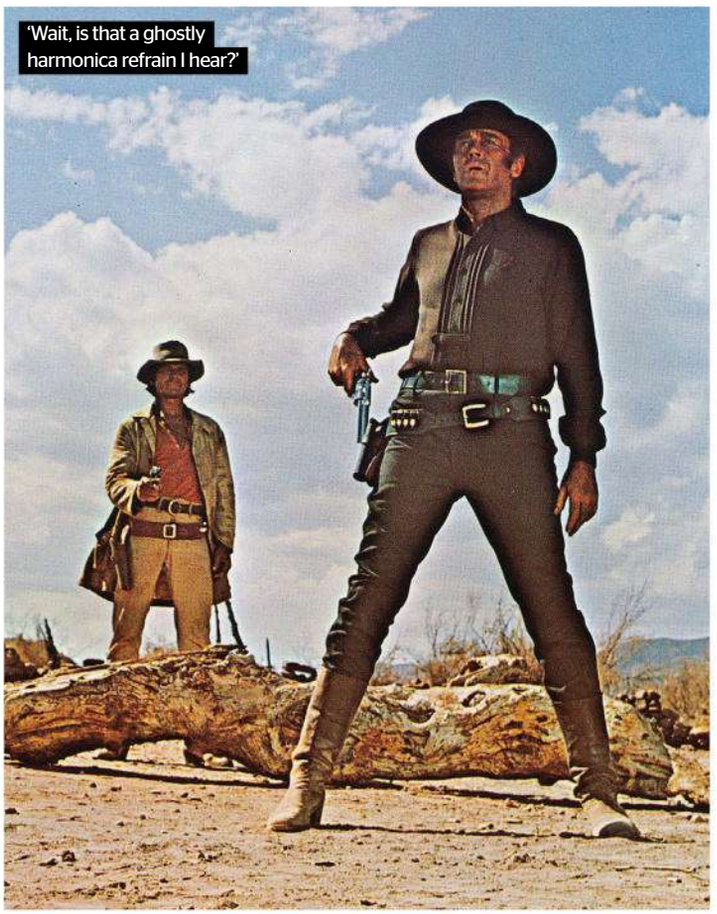
Setting the (dinner) table for decades of hillbilly horror to come, Tobe Hooper's subgenre-defining classic still packs a wallop in this 50th-anniversary 4K cinema rerelease. In Leatherface (Gunnar Hansen) and Sally (Marilyn Burns) it has, respectively, a boogeyman and final girl for the ages. But what makes it so special is its gonzo atmosphere, cultivating a fetid sense of delirium amid the nerve-shredding whooping and hollering. The sequels and reboots are bloodier, but can't match the original's lightning-in-a-bottle lunacy. **JOEL HARLEY**

BACKBEAT 15

1994 ★★★☆☆ **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

EXTRAS ★★★☆☆ Commentary, Featurettes, Deleted scenes, Gallery, Essay

Iain Softley's (*Hackers*) directorial debut shifts the focus away from the pre-fame Beatles and onto original bassist Stuart Sutcliffe (Stephen Dorff) and his relationship with photographer Astrid Kirchherr (Sheryl Lee). Unfortunately, despite decent performances – with Ian Hart's John Lennon completing the central love triangle – there's not enough dramatic meat on the bones of this story for *Backbeat* to come together as anything more than an enjoyable support act to the main event of The Beatles themselves. **ANTON VAN BEEK**



'Wait, is that a ghostly harmonica refrain I hear?'

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST 15

Horrid Henry...

1968 ★★★★★ **OUT NOW** 4K UHD

EXTRAS ★★★★★ Commentaries, Featurettes, Poster, Art cards, and more

Celebrating its 56th birthday with a 4K UHD makeover (and plenty of collectable goodies to boot), Sergio Leone's iconic western has been restored from the original camera negative and personally signed off by Martin Scorsese.

Coming after the Clint Eastwood-starring Dollars Trilogy, *Once Upon a Time in the West* is the summation of Leone's work in spaghetti westerns. Its loopy plotting (Dario Argento, no friend of logical narratives, worked on the story with Leone and Bernardo Bertolucci) circles some truly bravura set-pieces. So as cold-blooded gunslinger Frank (Henry Fonda), escaped felon Cheyenne (Jason Robards) and taciturn tough guy Harmonica (Charles Bronson) shoot it out for the farmstead of fiery widow Jill (Claudia Cardinale), we get panoramic landscapes, operatic camera moves and close-ups of grizzled faces, all choreographed to Ennio Morricone's twang-tastic score… and deafening silences.

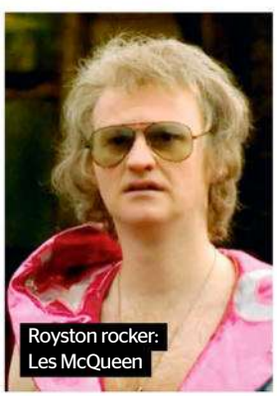
Meanwhile, the encroaching train tracks signify the death of the Old West. Rightly celebrated are Fonda's blue-eyed, black-hearted Frank and the superlative 10-minute opening sequence, where killers assemble to face off against Harmonica. But the whole 166-minute extravaganza is a subversive, stylish treat – along with the following year's *The Wild Bunch*, it pretty much gunned down the traditional western. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

THE VERDICT Deadly in 4K, this revered revisionist western ain't ready to hang up its guns.

Wild and Vasey guys: Gatiss, Pemberton, Shearsmith

MVP

MARK GATISS
AS LES MCQUEEN
Heads may no longer turn when he walks into a urinal, but the former Crème Brûlée guitarist is a standout among Royston Vasey's more iconic inhabitants. As one of the Gents' few wholly endearing tragicomic creations, it's telling that Les alone received a genuinely hopeful send-off in the 2017 anniversary specials.



Royston rocker: Les McQueen

CLASSIC TV
THE LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

Local legends...

1999-2017 AVAILABLE ON DVD, DIGITAL, iPLAYER

Welcome to Royston Vasey. You'll never leave!' reads the sign that 'greets' arrivals to the fictional setting for one of the most intoxicatingly dark comedy series to ever grace TV. Part bucolic promise, part simmering threat, the sign offers the perfect summation of a place where the mundane and the macabre meet.

The brainchild of the four-man comedy troupe (writer Jeremy Dyson and writer-performers Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith) whose name it adopted, *The League of Gentlemen* got its start as a stage sketch show before moving to radio in 1997. The jump to TV two years later saw a further evolution of the format, anchoring individual skits to ongoing narratives while also allowing its creators to pay greater homage to their inspirations. 'Tonally [they're] all over the place, the original shows,' said Shearsmith in 2017. 'They are clearly [made by] four young men who've been given a television programme and all their influences and things they love are just in it.'

In lesser hands, this could have been incredibly alienating for those unfamiliar with the material being referenced. But the show's homages were never the whole joke, just additional layers of entertainment – both for them and us. What really made *The League of Gentlemen* so memorable were the characters. Yes, they were, in the main, repulsive and loathsome. But across the show's three series, Christmas special, feature-film spin-off and concluding trio of anniversary specials, the nuanced writing and brilliant performances revealed a depth and pathos rare in sketch-based comedy.

It's this multilayered focus on character that separated *The League of Gentlemen*'s grotesques from those of comic contemporaries such as *Little Britain*. The jokes may be similarly puerile at times, but the Gents make us understand – and empathise with – the cycles of failure and inadequacy that birthed the likes of bullying restart officer Pauline and spiteful married couple Charlie and Stella. All that said, despite the satirical intent behind them, some characters haven't aged well – most notably the wife-stealing Papa Lazarou, a nightmarish caricature of cultural fears regarding travellers whose blackface make-up resulted in the series being removed from Netflix. (It carries a content warning on BBC iPlayer.)

But even with these flaws, *The League of Gentlemen* remains a transgressive, hilarious and melancholic gem. It wears its influences openly and its impact stretches far and wide, yet it still feels unique. A precious thing, indeed... **ANTON VAN BEEK**

ALAMY, BBC

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

EXTRAS

CONDIMENT

BARBIECUE SAUCE

OUT NOW

Because the internet (apparently) demanded it, Heinz and Mattel have turned an Insta-tease into a reality with this vegan mayo-with-BBQ sauce. Smoky, beetroot-y and startlingly pink, it's available in a limited run from Tesco, Ocado and other retailers, so make sure you're stocked up for summer; you won't be able to do beach without it. As for Barbie's box-office frenemy, it's surely time now to ketch-Opp… Pore over heinztohome.co.uk.

COLLECTIBLES

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES TUBBZ

OUT TBC MAY

Are we heading back to early-90s levels of Turtlemania? A *Mutant Mayhem* sequel is happening, an R-rated adap has been announced… and perhaps gnarliest of all, our half-shelled heroes have inspired a growing range of cosplaying ducks. New to the collection are supervillain Shredder (rocking armour, blades and killer frown) and supersensei Splinter (robe, staff, whiskers like chopsticks), plus Mini TUBBZ versions of the rad four. Surf over to tubbz.com.

TOY/COLLECTIBLE

LEGO INSIDE OUT 2 MOOD CUBES

OUT NOW

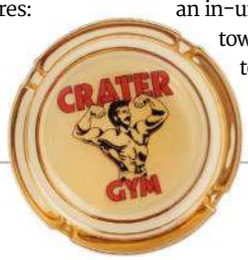
Feeling sadness you haven't seen Pixar's new sequel yet? Never fear, Lego has a play-and-display set that'll bring delight rather than disgust, with its two buildable cubes (each with space for bits and bobs), nine mood plates, display stand and memory balls. It comes with four figures: Joy, new emotion on the block Anxiety, and hard-hatted mind workers Foreman and Margie. To assist young brickheads, there's the intuitive Lego Builder app, which should stave off any box-chucking fits of anger. Feel your way to lego.com.

APPAREL

LOVE LIES BLEEDING

OUT NOW

'Pain Is an Illusion'; 'Love Can Make You Do Crazy Things'; 'Sex, Murder, Muscles'… No, those aren't the minutes from the last *TF* weekly meeting, but the eye-nabbing slogans on the wearable merch from Rose Glass' rom-thriller. Produced by Organic Ceramics and A24, the collection includes hats, hoodies, T-shirts, a gym tank top, an in-universe ashtray and a beach towel (though we'd be loath to get it covered in sand and sun cream). Give your wallet a workout at shop.a24films.com.



A24/ONLINE CERAMICS. HEINZ. LEGO. NUMSKULL

FRESH SPINS

Torrid techno tennis and mock-rock mayhem...

CHALLENGERS

★★★★★

Trent Reznor/Atticus Ross' hot streak shows no sign of cooling. For Luca Guadagnino's sex'n'sports flick, they whip up sweaty techno-house volleys of beats, synths and slamming (tennis) balls, with fleeting breathers. *Yeah x10* plays like LCD Soundsystem on centre court, contrasted keenly with the pensive *Social Network* echoes of *L'oeuf*. The raved-up *Brutalizer* lives up to its title, while the hard-driving *Match Point*'s synth chords sound out the right note of triumph. Played, indeed.

THE FALL GUY

★★★★★

Post-*Godzilla x Kong*, Kiss' *I Was Made for Lovin' You* continues its tour of duty in Yungblud's cover and – intermittently – composer Dominic Lewis' scoring valentine to 80s action-comedy machismo. Synths, beats, symphonics, Jan Hammer nods and poodle-rock guitars merge in mischief, with everything staying the right side of hollow snark thanks to Lewis' genre affection. Power ballad *Waiting for Love* maxes the Kenergy, though the rewritten *Unknown Stuntman* (Blake Shelton croons) might've been better unheard.

'Did you just crack your knuckles, or was that popping sound something... else?'

UNIVERSAL

CLASSIC SOUNDTRACK

ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND

JON BRION/VARIOUS HOLLYWOOD RECORDS

When it comes to evoking feelings in film music, Jon Brion knows no fear. Speaking to *Interview* magazine, the US producer, songwriter and composer noted how some filmmakers dread the accusation of 'leading the audience' with music. But not Brion: 'I think of it,' he said, 'as a job requirement.'

Twenty years ago, Brion proved as much for Charlie Kaufman and Michel Gondry's head-trip for the heart. After working for Paul Thomas Anderson on *Hard Eight*, *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love*, Brion's aptitude for emotional intricacy proved match-ready for *Eternal Sunshine*'s alt-symphony of bruised love. As ex-lovers plunge into memories of soured romance, Brion's score dives, too: circling memory's playground in smoky tendrils of keys, woodwind, guitar and reversed tape loops, his fragmented music makes bittersweet feelings tangible with exquisitely artful intelligence.

The soft-scudding waltz of *Theme* sets out the stall, its curiously backwards background loops suggesting a nostalgic love theme broadcast from memory's depths. Sweetness and sorrow merge, beautifully. *Collecting Things* is sadder still, its wonky guitar and weeping strings evoking painful pasts with a subdued yet sumptuous old-Hollywood grandeur. *Bookstore* washes in on warm waves of romanticism, while *Showtime* takes a detour into discordance, warping the film's main theme to suggest the journeys of self-erasure Jim Carrey's Joel and Kate Winslet's Clementine have undertaken.

Elsewhere, Brion captures the tingly trepidation of fresh-minted love in exquisitely dreamy fan favourite *Phone Call*, and the suspense of being between states in the neo-Hitchcockian *A Dream upon Waking*. *Postcard* brings woodwind-ghosted despondency and the woozy waltz of *Strings That Tie to You* adds doleful vocals – Brion's own. Perhaps most famously, a sadcore, *Sea Change*-era Beck also takes the microphone for a cover of the Korgis' *Everybody's Got to Learn Sometime*, a gorgeously foggy interpretation produced by Brion to maintain aching congruity with the score.

Songs from choral-pop outfit The Polyphonic Spree, garage-rockers The Willowz and Indian singer Lata Mangeshkar also feature, but it's Brion's work that renders *Eternal Sunshine*'s feelings most lovingly. The result banked him a Grammy nom and helped spur a storied collaborative career with Kanye West, Beyoncé, Frank Ocean and others. A wide-ranging scoring career also followed, peaks including a melancholy Kaufman reunion for *Synecdoche, New York* and a spry, supple Greta Gerwig team-up on *Lady Bird*. Even so, it's the fractured wisps of still-warm feeling Brion brought to *Eternal Sunshine* that lodge longest in the memory. **KEVIN HARLEY**

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

The breakfast room looked a *lot* different on the website...

ANNAPURNA, BIGMODE, SUPERGIANT

GAMES
LORELEI AND THE LASER EYES

Will give you quite a sight...

★★★★★ **OUT NOW** PC, SWITCH

Five years ago, indie developer Simogo gave us the tear-streaked sugar rush of *Sayonara Wild Hearts*, an 'interactive pop album' of heartbreak songs soundtracking thrilling bursts of arcade-style action. This, then, could be considered the challenging follow-up LP: rather than aiming for the heart, the Swedish duo's latest collaboration with boutique publisher Annapurna Interactive is setting its sights on a different vital organ. This is a much more cerebral affair – a narrative-led puzzler that stirs in inspirations from arthouse cinema and turn-of-the-century survival horror games.

You play as a nameless woman who arrives at a seemingly abandoned hotel, clutching an invitation from a mysterious host seeking help for a project that he says will 'transcend the limitation of art for humans'. The letter is dated 1963, but upon her arrival the woman discovers a computer system from 2014: the first clue that all is not quite as it seems.

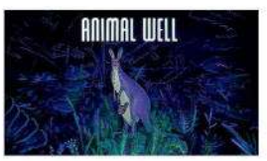
It's a purposely confounding welcome to a setting that has been designed to disorientate: as you view the action from a series of static camera angles you can see faint traces of fuzzy photographs superimposed onto the environments. This double-exposure trick gives the game a dreamlike quality – though in contrast to *Sayonara*'s colourful reverie, this is more of a monochromatic nightmare. Not least when, following a paranormal encounter, you return from exploring a maze to find that something else has journeyed back with you...

This place, though, is more elaborate puzzle box than haunted house: a labyrinth of sealed doors and bolted shortcuts, with clues scattered throughout its rooms, corridors and exterior grounds to help you unlock more of it. As the hotel opens up, so too does your understanding of the story and your role within it: what initially seems off-puttingly opaque exerts a firm grip as the picture steadily comes into focus.

It's every bit as satisfying as all those moments where a safe clicks open or a latch smoothly slides back – each of which is all the more rewarding for the effort and thought demanded to solve them. These playful, imaginative brainteasers aren't just cleverly conceived but stylishly mounted, too: by the time you reach the dazzling, perspective-shifting endgame, it feels as if Simogo is showing off. It may not be as immediate – or as emotional – as *Sayonara*, but that difficult ninth album might just be the studio's magnum opus. **CHRIS SCHILLING**

2 MORE

Recent thumb-twiddlers...



ANIMAL WELL
★★★★★

OUT NOW PC, PS5, SWITCH

Lone developer Billy Basso's debut is an astonishingly assured adventure in which a tiny creature negotiates a world of danger and wonder, armed with nothing more than a series of child's toys. Its characterful, intricate subterranean setting doesn't so much open out as inward, each deep-buried secret you unearth transforming the way you see and explore it.

HADES II
★★★★★

OUT NOW PC, PS4/5, XBOX ONE/SERIES X/S

Released in Early Access form, Supergiant's successor nevertheless feels more polished and complete than most finished games. This time you're chthonic nymph Melinoë, whose powerful sorcery gives combat a distinct tempo without disrupting its flow. With a range of new gods and enemies and a more visually diverse underworld, this is masterful sequel-making.

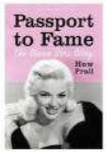
2 MORE

Bloodshed and bombshells...

FROM THE MOMENT THEY MET IT WAS MURDER

★★★★★

Veteran noir-heads Alain Silver and James Ursini execute a taut history of Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (1944). Kicking off with the true-crime story that inspired James M. Cain's source novella, the authors then explore how the moviemakers' tracks converged. Scripter Raymond Chandler receives due attention, alongside Wilder's journalistic previous and Miklós Rózsa's fatalist score. Key players' later careers are also surveyed, but not before the road to a biting game-changer comes to vivid life.
KEVIN HARLEY



PASSPORT TO FAME: THE DIANA DORS STORY

★★★★★

Despite being endlessly compared to Marilyn Monroe during her 1950s heyday, 'the Siren of Swindon' was never able to rival her film success or global fame. On home soil, however, the actor born Diana Fluck was embraced as a national treasure. Huw Prall's biography lists her on-screen credits and off-screen mishaps with commendable fidelity. As prose goes, though, it's on the clunky side, with an annoying! surfeit! of exclamation marks! pervading multiple chapters.
NEIL SMITH

'You know all this blue light could negatively affect our sleep-wake cycle, dear?'

BOOKS

MICHAEL MANN: A CONTEMPORARY RETROSPECTIVE

★★★★★ **JEAN-BAPTISTE THORET** WHITE LION PUBLISHING

One of Hollywood's premier stylists, Michael Mann's obsessively authentic features and epoch-making 80s TV series *Miami Vice* provide a rich bran tub of themes for film critic Thoret to theorise lavishly about: existential heroes, late-stage capitalism, why DoP Dante Spinotti made *Manhunter* (1986) so damn blue...

Cleaving to the director's arc closely, from his 70s *Starsky & Hutch* scripts to 2023 biopic *Ferrari*, this dense, verbose book delights in tracking the Mann hero's macho individualism, from *Thief* (1981) through to crime classic *Heat* (1995), the outlaw-loving *Public Enemies* (2009) and cyber-thriller *Blackhat* (2015). Thoret devotes much space to unpacking the postmodern philosophical ideas that underlie Mann's shiny, abstract cityscapes, as well as his debt to European film auteurs such as Antonioni and Jean-Pierre Melville.

It's an unabashedly thinky book, one that enjoys dissecting the swooning romance of *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992) as much as the fierce intelligence of *The Insider* (1999). Oddly, considering Mann's aesthetic reputation, its many film stills are on the small size, and there are no detailed shot breakdowns. But Thoret's detailed readings of everything from cult horror flop *The Keep* (1983) to resistance-figure study *Ali* (2001) will be manna to the Mann fans. **KATE STABLES**

RETURN OF THE JEDI: A VISUAL ARCHIVE

★★★★★

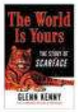
KELLY KNOX CLAYTON SANDELL TITAN

There's perhaps not too much left to uncover about the Holy Trilogy's last gasp (J.W. Rinzler's 2013 *Making of* remains definitive), but this Hutt-sized hardback offers some fresh context, tracing *Jedi*'s legacy from 80s Ewok spin-offs through to current shows like *The Mandalorian* and *Andor*. A smattering of inserts/pull-outs/overlays up the fun, and kudos to the picture researchers for digging up some wildly obscure merch: glue sticks, Dijon mustard, dog chow... **MATTHEW LEYLAND**

THE WORLD IS YOURS: THE STORY OF SCARFACE

★★★★★

GLENN KENNY HARPERCOLLINS



How did Howard Hawks' 30s gangster classic get reborn 50 years later as a violent Miami cocaine saga? With help from its director, writer Oliver Stone and star Michelle Pfeiffer, Kenny's tome painstakingly relates how Brian De Palma's 1983 epic became the cult it is today. An eventful shoot that saw Al Pacino hospitalised, a lengthy impasse over its rating and the pic's subsequent championing by the hip-hop community all feature. **NEIL SMITH**

REBEL RISING: A MEMOIR

★★★★★

REBEL WILSON HARPERCOLLINS

From formative childhood moments to celebrity encounters, the *Bridesmaids/Pitch Perfect* star relates her life story with an unsurprisingly high degree of candour – although this UK version redacts the widely reported allegations concerning *Grimsby* co-star Sacha Baron Cohen. Wilson somewhat over-eggs the rags-to-riches narrative, and some may find her garrulous, hyperbolic writing style a turn-off, but this is nonetheless a fun, fast-paced read. **MATT LOOKER**

STUDIOCANAL

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

TOTAL FILM BUFF

CINEMA CELEBRATED AND DEBATED. BOOSTING YOUR MOVIE GENIUS TO SUPERHERO LEVELS...

IS IT BOLLOCKS?

Film Buff investigates the facts behind outlandish movie plots.

THIS MONTH
BACK TO BLACK

Q In *Back to Black*, Amy Winehouse relapses and dies upon learning that her former lover Blake Fielder-Civil is becoming a father. True or false?

A classic case of a biopic tidying facts to aid the dramatic storytelling. In truth, Amy had been dating Reg Traviss (omitted from the film) for a year by this time, and Blake's baby was actually born in May 2011, two months before Amy died of alcohol poisoning. Similarly, Sam Taylor-Johnson's biopic has been accused of taking it easy on Amy's father Mitch: there's no mention of him turning up with a camera crew to make a Channel 4 documentary during her post-rehab holiday in Saint Lucia in 2009, and he appears more devoted and well-intentioned than he does in Asif Kapadia's Oscar-winning documentary, *Amy* (Mitch Winehouse has previously complained about his portrayal in that film). And while we're at it, would Amy, renowned for her love of music, really not have heard of The Shangri-Las' classic tune *Leader of the Pack*? As Jack O'Connell, who plays Blake in the film says, 'This is a reimagination, and it is fictitious.'

VERDICT BOLLOCKS

ALTERNATIVE BOX OFFICE

The biggest movies... WITH WINDY TITLES

01	**AIR** (2023)	$90.1M
02	**THE HURRICANE** (1999)	$74M
03	**THE LIFE OF DAVID GALE** (2003)	$39M
04	**BREAKIN'** (1984)	$38.7M (US)
05	**BLOWN AWAY** (1994)	$30.2M (US)
06	**DRAFT DAY** (2014)	$29.8M
07	**THE CURRENT WAR** (2017)	$12.2M
08	**THUNDERPANTS** (2002)	$3.1M
09	**HOWL** (2010)	$1.6M
10	**LIFE'S A BREEZE** (2013)	$0.1M

ON LOCATION REEL SPOTS BEHIND THE CAMERA

WHAT? In Jonathan Demme's 1991 classic *The Silence of the Lambs*, FBI trainee Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) tracks serial killer Jame Gumb aka 'Buffalo Bill' (Ted Levine) to his house.
WHERE? 8 Circle St. Layton, Perryopolis, Pennsylvania 15473
GO? This residential home sold for nearly $200,000 in 2016. Be respectful if you visit, and don't bother packing night-vision goggles to try sneaking into the infamous basement – it doesn't exist, and was created on a soundstage.

Want us to investigate if a movie scenario is bollocks or snapped yourself at a film location? Contact us at totalfilm@futurenet.com

ALAMY, BEACON/BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL, PRIME VIDEO, STUDIOCANAL, WARNER BROS

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

PLASTER CASTS IN MOVIES

We'll always have Paris.

1

LADY BIRD

Saoirse Ronan's titular teen throws herself out of a moving car to exit an argument with her mum. The vivid pink cast she then wears symbolises her defiance. You can buy posters of the cast inscribed with the legend, 'What if this is the best version?'

2

REAR WINDOW

Stuck at home, nosy neighbour L.B. Jefferies (James Stewart) spies murder. Perhaps. Hard to credit that Cornell Woolrich's short story only reveals our hero has a broken leg in the last line – the cast screwed onto Stewart's left leg is arguably the most famous in movies.

3

THE BIG FIX

Richard Dreyfuss' PI hustles with a broken wrist. Repeatedly asked how he did it, he changes the story each time. Viewers learn the truth in the film's coda, but only cinephiles will know the running gag was a late addition because Dreyfuss broke his wrist IRL.

4

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

Buffalo Bill (Ted Levine) slips on a fake cast to lure Catherine Martin (Brooke Smith) into helping him load furniture into his van. Then slams the doors on her. It was a favourite ploy of Ted Bundy's in the 1970s...

5

THE VANISHING

...and is also used by killer Raymond (Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu) in George Sluizer's chilling Dutch thriller *The Vanishing*, regarded by Stanley Kubrick as the most terrifying film he'd ever seen. The phrase 'suffocating tension' has never fitted more snugly.

6

SPANKING THE MONKEY

David O. Russell's indie debut sees Jeremy Davies' pre-med student spend a hot summer caring for his bedridden mom (Alberta Watson) while his salesman dad is away on business. Rubbing lotion onto her broken leg, Oedipal urges arise. That title gets plenty of use.

7

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

Ex-football hero Brick (Paul Newman) is broken, pining for his dead friend Skipper, whom he desired, and drinking heavily. His snapped ankle not only materialises his soul-sickness, but represents the chink in his masculine armour.

8

FAST & FURIOUS 7

Quite possibly the finest moment in cinema. As predator drones lay waste to the streets of Los Angeles, Hobbs (Dwayne Johnson) can't afford to be sidelined by a broken arm. Flexing his giant muscles, the cast splinters. 'Daddy's gotta go to work...'

9

THE NICE GUYS

'When you talk to your doctor, tell him you have a spiral fracture of the left radius,' says Jackson Healy (Russell Crowe) to Holland March (Ryan Gosling), before breaking his arm. The resultant cast adds to March's considerable hangdog charm in this buddy-noir.

10

GROWN UPS

He's Mr. Pink in *Reservoir Dogs* and Enoch 'Nucky' Thompson in *Boardwalk Empire*, but it's as weirdo Wiley in *Grown Ups* that Steve Buscemi most confronts danger, dangling upside down from a zip line by his foot. Cue full body cast. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

ALAMY

Did we miss something? Let us know on @totalfilm

REEL ESTATE

FOR SALE Constructed in 1919, this 2,700-square foot Dutch Colonial-style home is located at 1428 N. Genesee Avenue, Los Angeles, California (or is that 1428 Elm St, Springwood, Ohio?). With its twin pillars, green-shingled facade and stairway that turns to goo when you run from the bogeyman, this property is perfect for the suburban family who likes to stay up nights setting booby traps and talking on the bedside phone with its grotesque, tongue-fitted mouthpiece. Full disclosure: there have been complaints of children singing eerie nursery rhymes outside the property in the dead of night.

HINDSIGHT CORNER

ANG LEE

3D

DECEMBER 2012

'I think 3D makes it seem more like you are together with Pi, especially the ocean part… You literally feel you are there with him. I think that really helped the movie.'

APRIL 2024

'3D [is] so bad… The filmmakers are bad. The theatres are bad. The whole ecosystem is bad. It's not made for [3D]… The theatres are stingy. It's really dim, you can't really see it. It's flickering… People do a poor job, [it] gives you a headache, it's purely bad. You can't blame the audience for not liking it because it's bad.'

FLOP CULTURE

ANNIHILATION

Alex Garland's bravura sci-fi horror failed to draw in viewers in 2018. Did audiences and execs fight shy of its ambition?

Why it was a good idea (on paper)

From Marvel alumni to mutant bears, Alex Garland's loose adaptation of Jeff VanderMeer's 2014 novel spliced audience appeal with arthouse ambition. A star-powered female ensemble (Natalie Portman, Tessa Thompson, Jennifer Jason Leigh and more), hard sci-fi ideas, hairy horror: here was a high-concept, mid-budget genre piece with brains.

What went wrong?

Too brainy for some. Some of the tension over *Annihilation* centred on disputes between Skydance Media exec David Ellison and producer Scott Rudin over changes following poor test screenings. The way Garland tells it, Ellison wanted Portman's biologist, Lena, to be less self-destructive, a shift that would alter the film's thematic thrust. Ellison also thought the final alien/Portman dance was, quoting Garland, 'too weird'. Rudin/Garland wouldn't budge, so Paramount released at cinemas in the US, Canada and China but relegated the film to Netflix elsewhere. Perhaps Paramount were cautious after earlier sci-fi letdowns (*Star Trek Beyond*, *Ghost in the Shell*) and ambitious auteur gambits (Aronofsky's inferior *Mother!*). Perhaps a depressing lack of faith in female-fronted genre pieces factored in. Either way, whether this vote of low studio confidence dented its returns or not, Garland's *Ex Machina* follow-up under-performed at theatres. *Annihilation* 'shimmered' for most viewers at home, locking Paramount and audiences in a dance of minimised risk.

Redeeming feature

A psychedelic fantasy brimming with ideas about evolution and the pull of danger, *Annihilation* ranks among the headiest modern sci-fis. Portman is ace and Ben Salisbury/Geoff Barrow's shuddering score rules.

What happened next?

Garland embraced TV with *Devs*, before stoking debate in cinemas with *Civil War*. He's now talking retirement: can you blame him?

Should it be remade?

Nobody needs a doppelgänger of a great movie, but it's notable that Garland radically overhauled the novel. Another adap could be hugely different, so perhaps VanderMeer's whole Southern Reach novels series could tap a post-*Dune* audience ready for further SF freak-outs. **KEVIN HARLEY**

BUDGET	BOX OFFICE	AWARDS	TF STAR RATING	ROTTEN TOMATOES
$40-55m	$43.1m	0	★★★½	88%

ALAMY GETTY

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Rolling with the punches: *Million Dollar Baby* and *Rocky*

IS IT JUST ME OR DO BOXING MOVIES HIT HARDER THAN THE SPORT?

MATT GLASBY
@MATTGLASBY

Most sporting films can't hope to match the appeal of the thing itself – football being the most obvious example. But while the best boxing movies are unmissable, it's increasingly hard to justify the sport's existence at all. Paying people to hurt each other is unconscionable and watching the process panders to our very worst instincts.

The films, however, are often fabulous, and have done much to elevate the art form. Dating back to 1894 quasi-documentary *Leonard-Cushing Fight*, the genre played a part in the emergence of full-length features (1897's 100-odd-minute-long *The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight*), as well as the coming of sound (1929's part-talkie *The Shakedown*), among other landmarks. Imagine a world without the training montage – courtesy of 1976's *Rocky* et al – if you can.

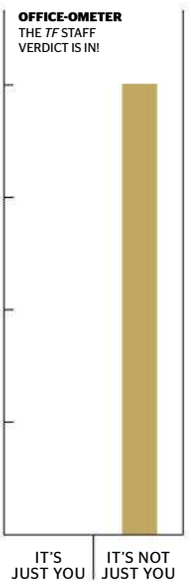
While the sport has attracted some shady characters over the years, the films call to world-class directors such as Martin Scorsese, Clint Eastwood and Michael Mann, and acting heavyweights such as Robert De Niro, Hilary Swank and Denzel Washington, many of them Oscar-garlanded for their troubles. Then there are supreme documentaries such as 1996's *When We Were Kings* and 2008's *Tyson*.

The appeal of the boxing film is simple. It's human drama boiled down to its essentials: two people in a ring, each trying to prove something through the medium of punching. As a character, the boxer, often a fighter who's really fighting with themselves, is almost mythic: they're an embodiment of the American dream; an avatar for the dark heart of humankind.

True, Method actors like De Niro and Day-Lewis may bust a gut training to convince viewers they're the real deal, but choreography and camera tricks take over when the fighting starts.

Watching on screen, we get a ringside seat to explore our endless fascination with violence – without anyone getting seriously hurt. Surely that's a win-win… or is it just me?

Share your reaction at gamesradar.com/totalfilm or on Facebook and Twitter.



MGM, TRAFALGAR RELEASING, WARNER BROS.

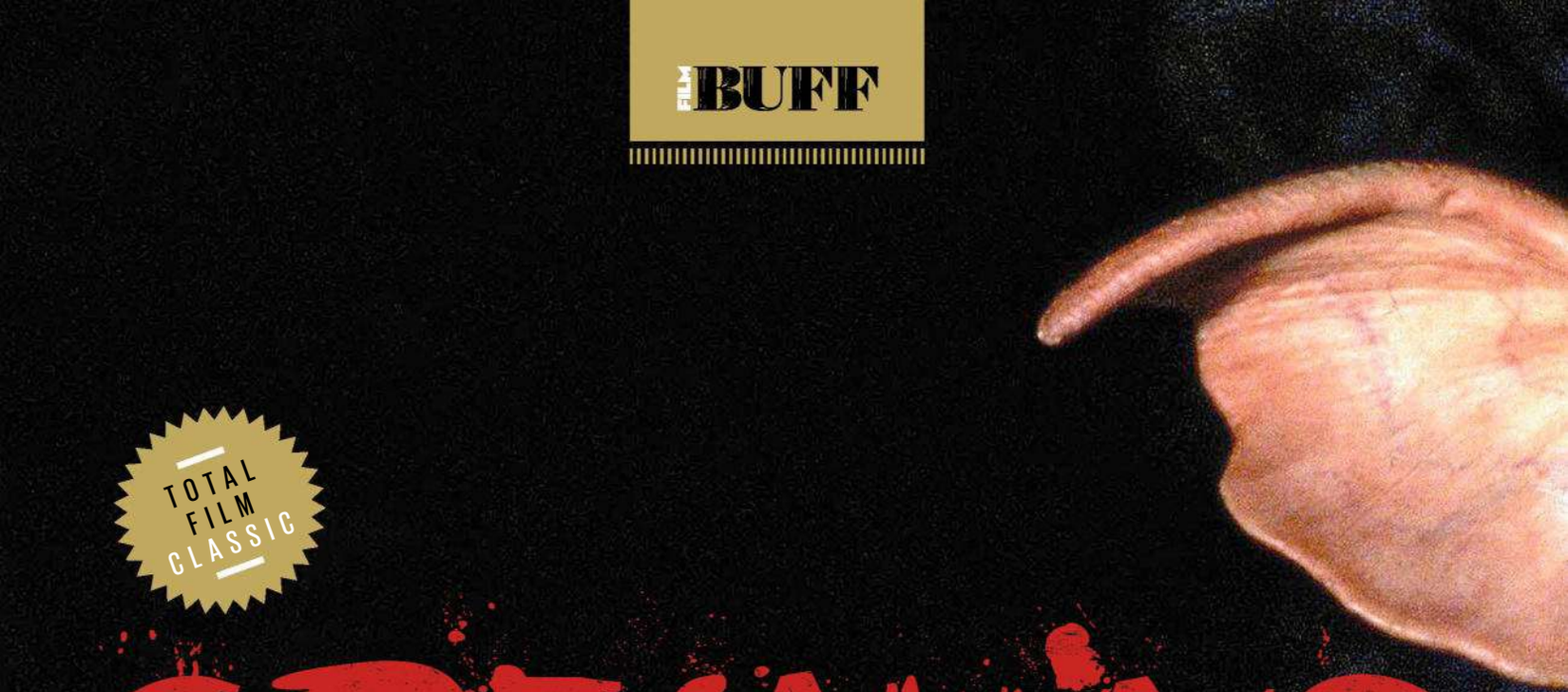
LAST TIME GIG MOVIES: TOP OF THE POPS?

PAUL WALLACE Nope, you can't beat the real thing. It's like being at F1, hearing the cars, smelling the fuel, the whole buzz!

RORY CONGI You're almost always guaranteed to get a good performance in a concert movie; artists don't normally release recordings of sub-par gigs.

LUC WIES
It's just you. A concert movie is just a movie, not a concert with concert vibes.

SLARTIBARTFAST
Let's see: £25 for a comfy seat, close-ups and surround sound… or £100-£200 to stand at the back of a stadium watching the screens because the artist is a speck?



TOTAL FILM CLASSIC

GREMLINS

As the most enduring monster movie of the 80s turns 40, director Joe Dante and producer Michael Finnell tell *Buff* how ignoring the rules helped them to create a nostalgic classic...

WORDS SIMON BLAND

Avoid bright lights, don't get them wet, and whatever you do, never feed them after midnight... The rules were simple yet despite these clear warnings, we all learnt the hard way what happens if any of these mandates were broken – and it wasn't pretty. In fact, according to director Joe Dante, no one was more dismayed at the gleefully slimy chaos that ensued in his 1984 monster-hit *Gremlins* than the studio that helped make it a reality.

'[Warner Bros.] just didn't get it,' Dante tells Buff, recalling the early days of his Steven Spielberg-produced Christmas classic 40 years after it first hit cinemas. 'They thought the Gremlins doing stuff like blowing their nose on the curtains was disgusting. At one point they said, "The only thing wrong with this movie is that it's got too many Gremlins in it." Spielberg said, "Well, we can cut out the Gremlins and call it *People* but nobody's gonna go see it..."'

Based on a spec script by the then-unknown *Home Alone* filmmaker Chris Columbus, *Gremlins* has become one of the most beloved movies of the 80s. It follows Billy Peltzer (Zach Galligan), a young man who receives a mysterious creature known as a Mogwai as a gift from his inventor father – along with those three all-important rules. Unfortunately for him but fortunately for us, it's not long before these are broken, unleashing a gaggle of cackling green Gremlins on his sleepy suburban town. Together with girlfriend Kate (Phoebe Cates) and new Mogwai pal Gizmo, Billy must stop head Gremlin Stripe from multiplying before things get even more out of hand.

'[Spielberg] was familiar with my stuff,' says Dante on how directing 1978's low-budget *Jaws* rip-off *Piranha* and 1981's werewolf horror *The Howling* convinced Spielberg he was the right guy to helm Amblin's debut release. 'My Roger Corman beginnings marked me as a B-picture director and since Spielberg's view was that this was going to be a B-horror movie, I was judged appropriate for the role. Chris Columbus' original draft was intended to be a B-horror movie, which is what Steven wanted to do as his first Amblin production because it was a safe bet.'

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

VIOLENT DELIGHTS

This mixture of sweet Spielberg-heart and darkly funny Dante-danger had *Gremlins* shaping up to be a family-friendly frightener. But before cameras could roll, a few issues had to be ironed out. 'It was originally much more violent,' says *Gremlins* producer Michael Finnell of Columbus' original story, 'which was fine with us, but the other problem was that it was virtually impossible to produce with the technology that existed at that time.' Dante adds: 'It was pretty gruesome. Billy's mother got her head chopped off and it bounced down the stairs and the Gremlins ate the dog. It was really grizzly, like many horror movies of that period were.'

With Spielberg's help, Dante and Columbus reigned in the chaos but even then, bringing these creatures to life was daunting. 'It was obvious we had to tame the movie to make it work for a wider audience. I think that was all for the good, too; had it been R-rated, it would still be languishing on the shelves,' suggests Dante. Finnell agrees: 'The original script had *Gremlins* running around in the snow and we couldn't do that; there was no such thing as CGI back in 1983. We had to change the screenplay into something we could actually make.'

Thankfully, Columbus had already done some of the design legwork, providing useful doodles with his script that gave Spielberg, Dante, Finnell and special effects artist and original Gremlin and Gizmo designer, Chris Walas, a starting point. 'Chris' sketches are not dissimilar to what we ended up with. They had the big ears, teeth, brows and reptilian quality,' says Dante of the design that ended up in his finished film. 'Gizmo was much more difficult because the fuzzy Mogwai design was up for grabs. There were a lot of possibilities but you had to think practically. OK, you can design it - but can you make it work?'

Luckily, there was a get-out clause. In Columbus' original draft, Gizmo only appeared for the first 20 minutes before transforming into Stripe. However, a bright idea from Spielberg made things much more complicated. 'Steven started taking a liking to Gizmo – particularly as we turned him into the colour of his cocker spaniel,' laughs Dante. 'At a dangerously late stage, he said, "We should keep this character around for the whole movie and he should be the hero's pal." We were about a month away from shooting and had this little pile of bolts and fur that would allow us to make 20 minutes of this character. Suddenly he had to be a star of the movie. We had to completely revamp our plans.'

Gizmo's role was rewritten to be 'the hero's pal'

Zach Galligan starred as Billy, who receives the mysterious Mogwai as a gift from his father

Walas worked overtime, inventing new techniques that would make Gizmo a living, breathing character. Multiple interchangeable faces were sculpted, each boasting a different expression that could be controlled by puppeteers on off-camera video monitors and swapped out to help Gizmo emote. A terrifying giant Mogwai head and suit were also created for close-ups requiring a more intimate level of detail. 'It was really big,' recalls Finnell, 'and whatever the background was had to be double-sized too, so we had to make double-sized props. It wasn't used a lot but you can tell because it's much more expressive.'

While a challenge, Dante still thinks Spielberg's decision to keep Gizmo around was the right choice: 'I credit it as the main reason why the picture is still so popular.'

NEW WAVE

Meanwhile, the Gremlins were a different beast entirely – and the script called for there to be loads of them, each doing sinister things and meeting slimy ends. During one particularly tense scene, Billy's mother kills three Gremlins single-handedly, with audiences finding out what happens when you put a Gremlin in a microwave. So how was that effect created? 'We put a Gremlin in a microwave. How else?' smirks Dante. 'We had a button that would explode the Gremlin inside [the microwave],' he reveals. 'It was very gooey and a one-take situation because we only had one microwave.'

There were also multiple crowd shots, like the famous cinema sequence where Stripe gathers the gremlins for a screening of Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. 'There were lots of them [in that scene],' says Finnell of the number of puppets required to pull off this iconic moment. 'Some were

ALAMY, WARNER BROS

Stripe terrorises poor Gizmo

Phoebe Cates played Billy's girlfriend Kate

Settling down to watch *Snow White*

literally hand puppets with no mechanics in them. I'm actually in there behind the seats with a couple on my hands,' he laughs. 'We optically duplicated more rows because there weren't enough to fill the entire theatre.'

One of the hardest sequences to capture saw the Gremlins overrun the tavern and trap Kate. In fact, it was so difficult that Dante shut down production to figure out how to do it. '[It allowed us to] fix puppets and plan the scenes with just the Gremlins, one of which was the bar scene – which, by the way, is the bar from *The Shootist*,' notes Dante, adding some classic movie trivia to our *Gremlins* chat. 'We brought Phoebe back and shot just the stuff in the bar for a week. We left the rough cut in [previews] to see what worked with audiences and kept the parts we thought worked best,' he reveals. 'It was such a time-consuming process and there was so much stale popcorn sitting in beer for a week that it wasn't the most fragrant of sets. It was exhausting but a lot of fun.'

In the end, Dante used all kinds of movie trickery to help create Gremlin mayhem, some simpler than others. 'The idea of Stripe shrinking into nothingness was actually the opposite of what was happening,' reveals Dante of the head Gremlin's gooey death scene. 'He was really being blown up. A tremendous amount of the movie was shot forward but played backwards – like the Gremlin sticking his head in the mixing bowl [during the kitchen scene]. He's actually taking his head out of it.' The tip-off? Billy's mother: 'If you look carefully, she's blinking the wrong way.'

Wild early previews let Dante know he was onto a hit but Spielberg still had notes including who should save the day. 'Originally, it was Billy [who kills Stripe],' says Finnell, 'but Steven said, "You know, really Gizmo should do that." We added that last minute. Zach was very upset.' However, Dante stood firm when it came to the suggested cutting of the now-infamous

> 'It was originally much more violent. Billy's mother got her head chopped off and the Gremlins ate the dog' **JOE DANTE**

scene where Kate explains how her hatred of Christmas linked back to the accidental death of her father. 'It encapsulated the whole ethos of the picture,' reasons the director. 'There's a duality of humour and horror but Warner Bros. just hated it.' Spielberg had his back but even then, the studio persisted: 'I heard after it was out they were sending instructions to projectionists to see if they could cut it, which thankfully didn't happen.'

Four decades on, it's clear that Warner Bros. had nothing to worry about, with *Gremlins* fandom still running strong and a third movie reportedly in the works from original writer Columbus. 'It's certainly the movie both Joe and I are most identified with,' admits Finnell. 'I fully expect my obituary to start with, "*Gremlins* producer dies at the age of… 103,"' he laughs. 'I can't knock *Gremlins* because it's kept me working,' adds Dante. 'I'm one of a number of 80s directors whose pictures were not box-office bonanzas but became very popular on home video. I've gone to film festivals all over the world and ran *Gremlins* for children in different languages and they always relate to it because, at heart, it's a "boy and his dog movie",' he says. 'The relationship between Billy and Gizmo is what makes [it].'

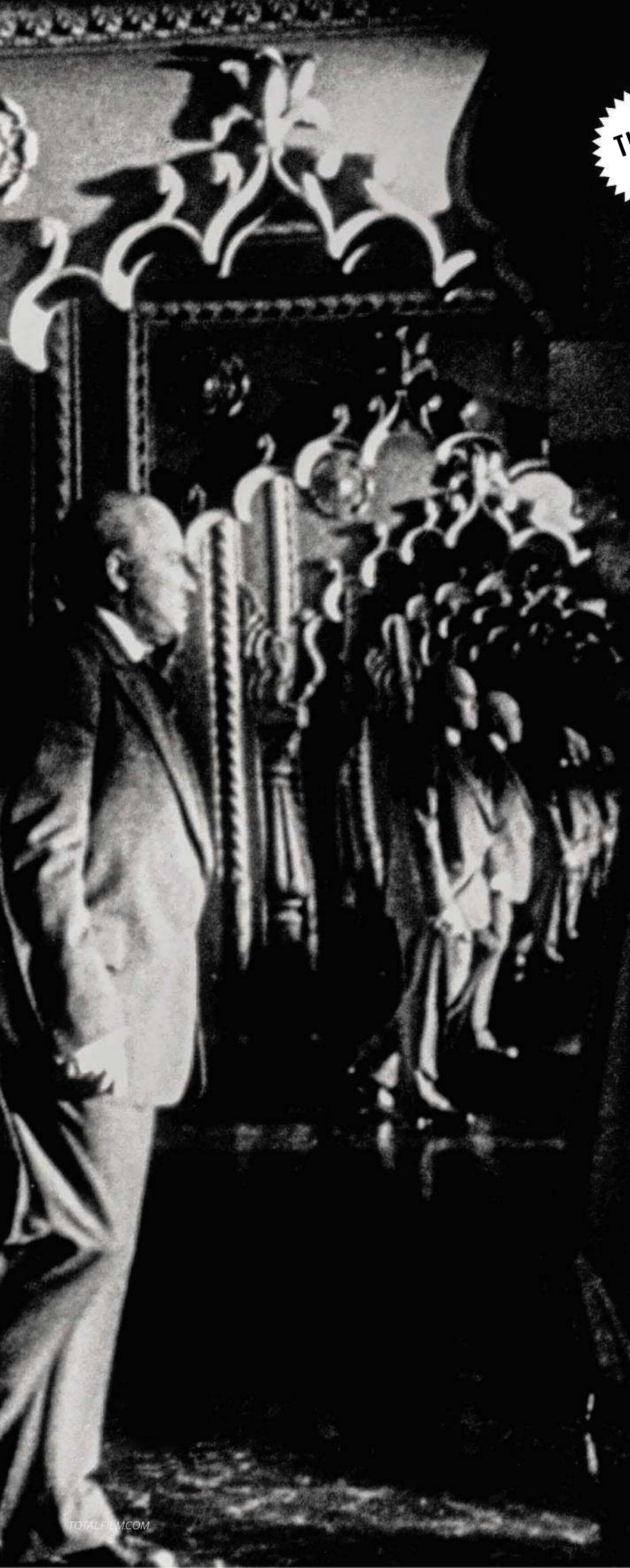
'Security!' Chaos reigns at Dorry's Tavern

GREMLINS IS AVAILABLE NOW ON 4K UHD, BLU-RAY, DVD, VOD AND STREAMING.

TOTALFILM.COM

ALAMY

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS



THE BIG SHOT

CITIZEN KANE'S MIRROR IMAGE

One of the most mysterious and beautiful, haunting sights in all of cinema,' is how the late, great critic Roger Ebert described it. And even those who have never watched Orson Welles' monumental masterpiece about the rise and fall of the titular newspaper tycoon will be familiar with the shot: an ageing, broken Charles Foster Kane (Welles) reflected by parallel mirrors, into infinity.

It arrives deep into the film, after Kane's mistress-turned-second-wife Susan (Dorothy Comingore) has left him. For years she was just another trinket gathering dust in Xanadu, Kane's Gothic castle strewn with artefacts from all around the world. 'Forty-nine thousand acres of nothing but scenery and statues. I'm lonesome,' she said, stirring the pieces of a jigsaw in front of a hearth the size of a Cadillac. But now it's the once-dynamic Kane who's lonesome, his (ad)ventures dwindling, his vigour faded, his influence dimmed, his friends estranged, his wife gone. After trashing her bedroom, he picks up a snow globe from among her possessions and walks woodenly past those mirrors.

It's some visual metaphor, Kane diminishing before our eyes. It also, if you'll excuse the pun, reflects one of the film's central themes: that no person can be tidily summed up. 'I don't think any word can explain a man's life,' says the reporter Jerry Thompson (William Alland) as he hunts down the meaning of 'Rosebud', Kane's final utterance. Throughout Welles' picture, we get different people's perspectives on Kane, and he emerges as arrogant, entitled, ruthless, devious, charismatic, insecure and more. To some, he's a fascist. To others, a communist.

Citizen Kane is often credited for such stylistic innovations as ceilinged sets, overlapping dialogue, deep-focus photography, jump cuts and chiaroscuro lighting, while it's also celebrated for creating flashbacks and multi-narrator viewpoints. In truth, all of these devices had been used before, but never together, with such brio. The work of experienced cinematographer Gregg Toland is especially dazzling, his layered images, painstakingly blocked and lit, stretching as far back as Kane in those mirrors. It was an immense contribution, acknowledged by Welles – who, like Kane, was often regarded as a slippery, ostentatious braggart – in the sharing of his title card: the direction-production and photography credits appear in unison.

Such selfless generosity was unheard of in Hollywood. But let us not forget that it's not just an infinite amount of Kanes who appear in that mirror shot, but an infinite amount of Welleses, too. Like the character he played, he can't be pinned. **JAMIE GRAHAM**

THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE SCI-FI, FANTASY & HORROR MAGAZINE

INSIDE!

A DOUBLE-SIDED DOCTOR WHO POSTER

2 DOCTOR WHO ART CARDS

PLUS! AN EXCLUSIVE EXTRACT FROM BBC AUDIOBOOKS!

NEW ISSUE ON SALE NOW!

Subscribe & save at magazinesdirect.com/sfx

OCTAVIA SPENCER

Top of the world, Ma...

START TIME

Octavia Lenora Spencer was born in 1970 in Montgomery, Alabama, the sixth of seven children. Her theatrical debut came in Joel Schumacher's *A Time to Kill* (1996) amid a star-stuffed cast (Bullock, McConaughey, both Sutherlands). Although a blink/miss role – she's credited as 'Roark's nurse' – the film would be the first of several socially conscious dramas on her CV. (And she also reteamed with Bullock on the latter's 1998 short *Making Sandwiches*.)

BIT PARADE

Spencer moved to LA in 1997, following the advice of her friend (and future director of *The Help*) Tate Taylor. Bit parts followed in a slew of pictures, ranging from comedies (*Never Been Kissed*, 1999) to superhero movies (Raimi's *Spider-Man*, 2002), horror (Rob Zombie's *Halloween II*, 2009) and dramas (2005's *Coach Carter*, where she reunited with *A Time to Kill* co-star Samuel L. Jackson). But it wasn't until 2011 that her big break came...

MAID TO SHINE

Adapted from Kathryn Stockett's novel, *The Help* (2011) follows Black maids in civil-rights-era Mississippi and their relationships with their white employers. Although a critical and commercial hit, the film has since been heavily criticised – not least by some of the cast – for being a white-saviour narrative which, in the words of lead Viola Davis, 'wasn't ready to tell the whole truth'. Regardless, the film helped break Spencer into the big league.

GONG-TERM SUCCESS

After picking up her Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *The Help*, Spencer went on to garner further noms for *Hidden Figures* (2016) – about a team of Black female mathematicians working at space-race-era NASA – and *The Shape of Water* (2017), Guillermo del Toro's creature-feature romance. They saw Spencer set a record as the first Black female actor to receive two Oscar nods in consecutive years.

ONWARD, UPWARDS

Since then, Spencer has continued to deliver scene-stealing support in the likes of *Fruitvale Station* (2013), *Instant Family* (2018) and *Luce* (2019), while taking the lead – as a homicidal psychopath – in 2019's *Ma*. She also played Corey the manticore in Pixar's *Onward* (2020). Spencer has been influential behind the camera, too, exec-producing *Green Book* (2018). And she's set to produce and star in upcoming sci-fi comedy *Nobody Nothing Nowhere*. Watch this space... **TIM COLEMAN**

KEY MOVIES

THE HELP 2011

★★★☆☆

The first-time nominee won Best Supporting Actress as Minny, who proves revenge is best served with a slice of 'chocolate' cake.

HIDDEN FIGURES 2016

★★★★☆

As real-life 'human computer' Dorothy Vaughan, Spencer is the standout in this drama honouring three of NASA's finest minds.

THE SHAPE OF WATER 2017

★★★★★

Spencer brings no-nonsense charisma, ace comic timing and staunch empathy to Guillermo del Toro's Best Picture winner.

MA 2019

★★★☆☆

Spencer startles as a teen-terrorising outcast in a cult-horror meme machine (JuMAnji, The Greatest ShowMA, MAsery, et al).

20TH CENTURY STUDIOS, ALTITUDE, DISNEY, SONY, UNIVERSAL

GOLDEN GRAHAMS

Editor-at-Large Jamie Graham unearths underrated classics...

THIS MONTH

The Horrible Dr. Hichcock and *The Perfume of the Lady in Black*

There comes a point in the life of every serious horror fan when they start to explore the Italian genre movies of the 60s, 70s and 80s.

For me, it began with the films of Dario Argento (*The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, *Deep Red*, *Suspiria*), then widened to take in Mario Bava (*The Mask of Satan*, *Blood and Black Lace*, *A Bay of Blood*) and Lucio Fulci (*Zombie Flesh Eaters*, *The Beyond*, *City of the Living Dead*). It's the same for most, I imagine. These are the names that dominate lists. Just this morning, in readiness for this article, I glanced at the Top 46 Italian Horror Movies according to Rotten Tomatoes, and all of the above movies (and several more) by this unholy trinity featured.

Look beyond Argento, Bava and Fulci, and the most commonly named titles are films like Pupi Avati's *The House of the Laughing Windows*, Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust*, and Lamberto Bava's *Demons*. Two films that are not in that RT46, though – or, indeed, ever mentioned by mainstream media – are Riccardo Freda's *The Horrible Dr. Hichcock* (1962) and Francesco Barilli's *The Perfume of the Lady in Black* (1974). In the first, which opens in late-19th-century London, the titular surgeon (Robert Flemyng) develops an anaesthesia that slows his patients' hearts. At night he injects his wife Margaretha (Maria Teresa Vianello) so he might indulge his necrophilic kink, but then accidentally kills her for real and flees the country. Upon returning 12 years later, his new wife Cynthia (genre icon Barbara Steele) believes the house to be haunted by Margaretha's ghost. *The Perfume of the Lady in Black*, meanwhile, sees Silvia (Mimsy Farmer) start to glimpse both her dead mother and herself as a young girl. Is a childhood trauma rising to the surface? Are the other residents in her Rome apartment block conspiring to freak her out? Is something supernatural at play? Or might she be losing her mind?

Both films are gorgeously shot in Technicolor, and both conjure the spirit of Edgar Allan Poe with their favouring of black cats and thunderstorms, obsession and madness (*Hichcock* also features live burial and a *House of Usher*-style fiery climax). The two movies further overlap in their employment of malevolent other-wordly whispers and their fondness for women in spectral white floating down corridors.

But there are differences, too. *Hichcock*, as the title suggests, borrows generously from the Master of Suspense, most notably *Rebecca* and *Vertigo* – the title was chosen to stress the links as a marketing ploy, though with the name misspelt to prevent legal action. As for *Perfume*, it prefers to capture the lingering scent of Polanski's *Repulsion* and *Rosemary's Baby* as its heroine cracks up in her apartment. Italian horror is uninterested in logic at the best of times, but Barilli's movie doubles down on jettisoning rationale and causal plotting to instead fashion a disjointed fever dream. A ghost story with elements of giallo, it then paves the way for the Italian cannibal and zombie movies to come, with a brilliantly bonkers, freaky climax.

Italian horror movies are not for everyone and thank goodness for that. But if you give them a go and like what you see, know that there's life – or should that be death? – beyond Argento, Bava and Fulci.

JAMIE WILL RETURN NEXT ISSUE... FOR MORE RECOMMENDATIONS, FOLLOW @JAMIE_GRAHAM9 ON TWITTER/X

See these if you liked...

REBECCA 1940
New Mrs. de Winter arrives at her husband's home to find a housekeeper who's enthralled with old Mrs. de Winter. *The Perfume of the Lady in Black* mirrors the device.

ROSEMARY'S BABY 1968
A fragile woman encounters strange neighbours and occult weirdness in a well-appointed apartment block.

THE OMEN 1976
Silvia's apartment in Mincio Square was also the Thorn's Rome home in Richard Donner's Devil-child classic.

SUSPIRIA 1977
Argento's colourful, cacophonous masterpiece is the poster child of the Italian horror genre.

ONE MORE...
ZEDER 1983
This bizarre, low-key Italian zombie film is like no other. For starters, there's no gore...

EURO INTERNATIONAL FILM, WARNER BROS.

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

INTERMISSION

A WRITER TAKES PAUSE TO CONSIDER....

Wicked Little Letters and swearing at the cinema

JOEL HARLEY
@JOELHARLEY

The first time I heard someone swear in a film was on the deck of the *Enterprise*. The stardate was 1994, and eight-year-old Joel was about to have his mind torpedoed by *Star Trek: Generations*.

My ears were no stranger to swearing, but I was a sheltered child, having been raised on a TV diet of *The Next Generation* (the cuddliest Trek), and strictly banned from anything above the BBFC's recommended age rating. I was therefore shocked to hear a man I'd watched on screen my whole life utter the words 'Oh shit' in a Star Trek film.

This, coming from the wholesome, upstanding Lieutenant Commander Data of all people, was a shocking act of transgression, and my most vivid screen-swearing memory.

Still, my parents' diligence couldn't shield me from edgier things for long, and nor could they keep me from befriending The Dave, a boy my own age (now 13) who owned a VHS player and a copy of the *South Park* movie.

By the early 2000s, a fascination with genre cinema was born. We sought out the violent and the crude, religiously poring over *Blade*, *Predator* and the Alien films, memorising and quoting the best swears. At the same time, the home-computer revolution boomed. I was permitted an hour a day, which I would use to chat with The Dave via MSN Messenger. It was a recipe for disaster. The perfect storm of teenage boys and foul mouths was inevitable.

On this fateful day, I bade farewell to The Dave, allowing my younger brother his turn at the computer. I was halfway up the stairs to my room when I heard the speakers ping repeatedly, notifying a series of incoming messages. To quote Mr. Data, oh shit.

I rushed back to find my 11-year-old brother at the computer; the chat wide open, displaying mine and The Dave's log for all to see. 'Mo-omm, what's a [redacted]? Joel and David are talking about them on the computer,' my brother announced, with the impish grin of someone who knows precisely what a [redacted] is.

Standing to behold, my mother's face paled at the profanities plastered over the screen. 'Whose mom is the biggest bitch in the whole wide world?' she gasped, not getting the reference.

In addition to The Dave's vile screed, my own was also visible, displaying a knack for creative swearing that hinted at a future as a literature graduate and professional writer. For now, however, it was deeply obscene, and against the agreed code of conduct.

> 'Delivered by an Oscar-winning national treasure, screen swearing has never been so respectable'

I saw only one way out of this situation, and immediately threw The Dave under the bus. As I suspected, my mother was not computer literate enough to understand the chat layout, nor find the bigger, longer and uncut histories I hadn't yet deleted.

I logged off, taking my week-long computer ban on the chin. After all, it would have been worse if she'd realised I'd been the one praising The Dave's uncle-loving prowess. The lesson? Always remember to log out of Messenger.

I was reminded of this swearing-of-age story as I encountered *Wicked Little Letters* earlier this year. While watching Thea Sharrock's small-town who-swore-it comedy, I recalled my exchanges with The Dave, and the outrage it promptly caused; one for which, like Jessie Buckley's Rose, my own dear friend took the blame, while the precious, sensible child was martyred.

In the years that followed, my love of swearing blossomed, embracing it as a writer and fan of colourful speech. Like Olivia Colman's put-upon Edith Swan, I found emancipation and self-expression in the depths of *Roger's Profanisaurus*.

And, as delivered by an Oscar-winning national treasure, screen swearing has never been so respectable. There's enough in *Wicked Little Letters* to give your gran a mild heart attack, but it's delivered with all the gravity of a *Midsomer Murders* episode; *South Park* for the broadsheet crowd.

Even my beloved Star Trek has embraced the swear, with the crew of the *Discovery* regularly effing up a positronic storm and a Starfleet staffer blasphemously telling the titular character to 'shut the fuck up' in *Picard*.

Wicked Little Letters doesn't condemn foul-mouthed firebrand Rose for her profanities, reserving judgement (if half-heartedly) for Edith, because of her dishonesty, not the swearing it celebrates. Swearing is a gift, but one that should be responsibly deployed; the difference between a snide poison pen letter and a colourful but earnest rebuttal; the contrast between a well-earned character moment and crassly telling an octogenarian to shut the fuck up for shock value.

As my mother understood, there's a time and a place for swearing. It wouldn't be so fun now if boundaries hadn't been there to break in the first place, and it still feels taboo, in all the right ways. Well, if it's good enough for Data and Olivia Colman…

ALAMY

THE *TF* BRAIN

VIRTUAL REALITY

The questions are about simulation... but the struggle is real!

EASY

1 Which colour pill does Keanu Reeves' Neo choose in *The Matrix*?
2 In which year is *Ready Player One* set? a) 2036 b) 2037 c) 2045
3 Which of these Michael Douglas erotic thrillers features a VR sequence? a) *Basic Instinct* b) *Disclosure* c) *Fatal Attraction*
4 In *Johnny English Strikes Again*, what food items does Johnny use as weapons while wearing a VR headset?
5 In which 1993 movie does Sandra Bullock have virtual sex with an action superstar?

MEDIUM

1 Which VR thriller released in 1992 was renamed *Virtual Wars* in Japan?
2 In which animated movie do characters enter the virtual world of U?
3 What's the aquatic name of the (fictional) technology in *Strange Days*?
4 At the centre of *The Thirteenth Floor* (1999) is a VR simulation of which year?
5 Henry Rollins, Ice-T, Dolph Lundgren... Name the movie.

HARD

1 Who are the respective directors of *Tron*, *Tron: Legacy* and the upcoming *Tron: Ares*?
2 In *Virtuosity*, what does the acronym SID stand for?
3 Earth is at war with which alien race in *Ender's Game*?
4 Complete the *eXistenZ* tagline: '__ it. __ it. __ for it.'
5 *Brainstorm* (1983) featured the final performance by which star?

ANSWERS: EASY – 1. RED. 2. C) 2045. 3. B) *DISCLOSURE*. 4. A PAIR OF BAGUETTES. 5. *DEMOLITION MAN*. **MEDIUM** – 1. *THE LAWNMOWER MAN*. 2. *BELLE*. 3. SQUID. 4. 1937. 5. *JOHNNY MNEMONIC*
HARD – 1. STEVEN LISBERGER, JOSEPH KOSINSKI, JOACHIM RØNNING. 2. SADISTIC, INTELLIGENT, DANGEROUS. 3. THE FORMICS. 4. 'PLAY'. 'LIVE'. 'KILL'. 5. NATALIE WOOD

101 FILMS, ALAMY, UNIVERSAL, WARNER BROS.

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

NAME THE FRAME

Can you guess these eight disaster-movie scenes?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

ANSWERS: 1. SHARKNADO. 2. ARMAGEDDON. 3. THE PERFECT STORM. 4. THE TOWERING INFERNO. 5. VOLCANO. 6. DEEP IMPACT. 7. SAN ANDREAS. 8. THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

Dialogue

Mail, rants, theories etc.

HAVE YOUR SAY
TOTALFILM.COM
VIDEOS · REVIEWS · TRAILERS · NEWS

@ totalfilm.com twitter.com/totalfilm facebook.com/totalfilm totalfilm@futurenet.com

★ STAR LETTER

Congratulations on celebrating 350 issues! I thoroughly enjoyed reading the article on all your past covers and loved the nostalgic feeling it brought me. I remember very clearly at age 15 buying issue 23, with Jennifer Lopez on the cover (I bought it for the movie content, honest!). Shortly after, I became a subscriber – which I still am today, more than 25 years later. I've gone from that randy lad with a massive crush on Jennifer Lopez to an almost 41-year-old, married (sadly not to Jennifer) father of two, and *TF* has been there the entire time. Here's to another 350 issues!
PS: Still have a crush on Jennifer Lopez.
PPS: I can confirm this email has been approved by my actual wife.
GLENN PELL, NORFOLK

Thanks very much, Glenn. Amazing to think we've been in a love triangle with you and J.Lo this past quarter-century without even knowing it. It's like a cleaner version of *Challengers* (though when it gets to deadline week we can easily out-sweat those tennis players). Glenn and everyone with a letter printed here will receive a copy of survival drama *The End We Start From*, out now on Blu-ray via Signature Entertainment. Didn't send an address? Email it! Or you'll sadly miss the end, the start and everything in between!

PAPER CHASE

Though I've never been based in the UK, I was lucky enough to discover the first issue of *Total Film* in 1997 in Brussels. Since then, I've lived in Paris and Denmark and read every single issue, until September 2023 when I moved to a remote village in South Africa, and I knew it was time to say goodbye. I know you have a digital version but I'm one of your 'old' readers and need to feel the paper. Anyway, after a few weeks, the lack of *TF* was too much, and I ordered issue 343, which I could not have been happier to have received. So, what now? Will I order an issue here and there? You bet I will. Will I look for *TF* every time I set foot in Europe? Definitely! I will make sure to find my way to an issue wherever I can.
MICHAEL R., VIA EMAIL

That's good to hear – and fingers crossed you'll be making like the Griswolds and embarking on a European vacation soon (without any mishaps involving wrecked monuments and rental-car kidnappings, that is). But please do consider a digital subscription, which comes with access to our back-issue archive: no paper, but all the feels.

Jennifer Lopez is rocked by the news *Out of Sight* was released 26 years ago

@navidshuda
[ON 'SUPERHERO FATIGUE'] 'Fatigue is only caused by poor movies... If they're good I can watch a different superhero movie every day.'

THE IDEA OF REVIEW

After rewatching the brilliant *Babylon* I started to wonder how you, as film critics, manage to write a review? How do you make sure you don't miss important moments while scribbling in the semi-darkness? And how do you avoid getting so drawn into the film, as I did with *Babylon*, that you forget to make notes and remain objective? As for the film itself, I remember leaving the cinema and being told by another audience member, 'Well, that was a load of rubbish; *M3GAN* was far better.' I still don't understand his reaction.
MARK O'FLYNN, HINCKLEY

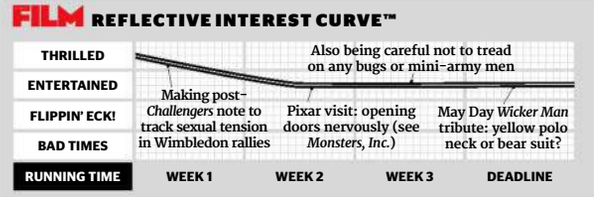
Some make notes during the film, some afterwards. And some of the

WHAT YOU MISSED ON THE POD LAST MONTH

Exclusive interviews with Ryan Gosling, Emily Blunt, Kirsten Dunst, Zack Snyder and more. Our favourite stunts. The best training montages. The right way to say 'biopic'. Plus reviews and more, every week!

INSIDE TOTAL FILM

FILM REFLECTIVE INTEREST CURVE™



SIGNATURE. 20TH CENTURY STUDIOS. NETFLIX

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

OFFICE SPACED

CHATTER 'GEMS' OVERHEARD IN THE *TOTAL FILM* OFFICE THIS MONTH...

*'Riskiest thing I've done? Seeing the 15-rated *Licence to Kill* when I was only 14.' ***'Already got my 10th-anniversary *Force Awakens* strapline sorted: "She's ev-Rey-thing. He's just Ren."'**

more disorganised reviewers dash out halfway to get writing materials and end up committing their pithy observations to bits of napkin with a Pepsi straw dipped in ketchup, but that's fairly rare. As for the 'M3GALON' debate, our expert critical opinion is that 'M3GALON' sounds like the title of a film Jason Statham hasn't made yet.

CLASSY WAR

I've just watched *Civil War*. I didn't have high expectations, but wasn't disappointed. I was struck by the unusual battle scenes (and powerful gunshots); by the Kirsten Dunst character's tough look and observant photographer's eye; and by the slow but constant drip-feed of emotion. The scene where the car drives by the burning forest gave me goosebumps, knowing what had just happened and anticipating what would come next. It was absolutely worth watching for its artistic qualities alone, especially the cinematography, which blew me away.

MAJA MICHIEWICZ, NEW MILTON

You were impressed, we can tell. Certainly a potent film to release in a US election year. Although 2024 has some way to go before it can top 2004, which gave us *Fahrenheit 9/11*, *Team America: World Police* and the capper, *Napoleon Dynamite*. Never mind presidential candidates' views on law and order and all that – show us those 'liger' drawing skills and Jamiroquai dance moves!

DARTH ART

I enjoyed *The First Omen*, but I think the poster was a bit misleading. It has Darth Vader standing in a doorway.

Daniel Messersmith
'[The xenomorph in *Alien: Romulus*:] me smiling in all my family photos'

Where was Darth in the film? Or was he the chap who did the deed with the nun? Wasn't clear.

JIM RASKER, BOTLEY

Maybe it was meant as a 25th-anniversary homage to *The Phantom Menace* and its teaser poster, where the shadow of Vader looms over young Anakin as he stands on Tatooine? Though we've often wondered if the Darth design could be taken literally as a piece of wall art; on top of his other claims to infamy, could Ani secretly be Banksy?! (Next month: you seem to know an awful lot about grassy knolls, Mr Binks, what's that about?)

YOU CAN ALSO WRITE TO Total Film, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London, W2 6JR (postal addresses will be used for the sole purpose of sending out prizes)

TOTAL FILM

EDITOR
MATT MAYTUM
matt.maytum@futurenet.com @mattmaytum

DEPUTY EDITOR JORDAN FARLEY
jordan.farley@futurenet.com @JordanFarley

REVIEWS EDITOR MATTHEW LEYLAND
matthew.leyland@futurenet.com @totalfilm_mattl

EDITOR-AT-LARGE JAMIE GRAHAM
jamie.graham@futurenet.com @jamie_graham9

NEWS EDITOR LAUREN MILES
lauren.miles@futurenet.com @lauren_m1les

ART EDITOR ANDY McGREGOR
andy.mcgregor@futurenet.com

FILM GROUP
Editor (*SFX*) Darren Scott **Art Editor** Jonathan Coates
Deputy Editor Ian Berriman **Production Editor** Ed Ricketts

CONTRIBUTORS
Art Minyi Seo, David Graham
Cover manipulation and prepress Gary Stuckey, Art Production Hub
Hollywood Correspondent Adam Tanswell
Contributing Editors Paul Bradshaw, Jane Crowther, Kevin Harley, Leila Latif, James Mottram, Neil Smith
Contributors Simon Bland, Tim Coleman, Tom Dawson, Matt Glasby, Joel Harley, Matt Looker, Chris Schilling, Kate Stables, Gabriel Tate, Anton van Beek
Entertainment Editor, Gamesradar+ Emily Murray
Deputy Entertainment Editor, Gamesradar+ Fay Watson
Senior Entertainment Writer, Gamesradar+ Bradley Russell
Senior Entertainment Writer, Gamesradar+ Lauren Milici
Entertainment Writer, Gamesradar+ Molly Edwards
Photography Gareth Cattermole, Getty, Alamy
Thanks to Rhian Drinkwater, Ian Farrington, Cliff Hope, Heather Seabrook, Matt Yates (Production), Nick Chen, Richard Jordan
Cover image Courtesy of Warner Bros.

ADVERTISING
Media packs are available on request. Please contact Rosie Liddington.
Commercial Director Clare Dove clare.dove@futurenet.com
Head of Commercial Jon Restall jon.restall@futurenet.com
Account Manager, Gaming & Film Rosie Liddington rosie.liddington@futurenet.com

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING
Total Film is available for licensing and syndication. To find out more, contact us at licensing@futurenet.com or view our available content at www.futurecontenthub.com
Head of Print Licensing Rachel Shaw

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Orders and enquiries **0330 333 1113** (from UK) or **+44 330 333 1113** (from overseas)
Online enquiries **www.magazinesdirect.com** Email **help@magazinesdirect.com**

Total Film (ISSN 1366-3135 USPS 23870) is published monthly with an extra issue in April by Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK. BAR subscription prices are £71.50 for UK, €153 for Europe, $173 for US, £133 for Rest of World. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc., co BBT 150-15 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn Brooklyn NY 11256. US POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Total Film*, Air Business Ltd, c/o World Container Inc., 150-15 183rd St. Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Subscription records are maintained at Future Publishing, co Air Business Subscriptions, Rockwood House, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3DH, UK.

If you are an active subscriber, you have instant access to back issues through your iOS or Android device/s. You will only be able to access the digital back issues as long as you are an active subscriber. To purchase single back issues (print format only) visit: magazinesdirect.com (click on 'Single issues' tab) or email: help@magazinesdirect.com For further help call: +44(0)330 333 1113 Lines are open Mon-Fri 8.30am-7pm and Sat 10am-3pm UK time. Magazinesdirect.com is owned and operated by Future Publishing Limited.'

MARKETING AND CIRCULATION
Global Trade Marketing Director Victoria Chappell
Head of Subscriptions Sharon Todd
Newstrade Director Ben Oakden

PRINT, PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION
Production Manager Frances Twentyman
Head of Production, UK & US Mark Constance
Production Project Manager Clare Scott
Senior Ad Production Manager Jo Crosby
Ad Production Coordinator Emma Thomas
Digital Editions Controller Jason Hudson
Printed in the UK by William Gibbons & Sons, on behalf of Future
Distributed by Marketforce UK, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR mfcommunications@futurenet.com

MANAGEMENT
Managing Director, TV & Film Matthew Pierce
SVP Consumer Kevin Addley
Head of Art & Design Rodney Dive
Editorial Production Manager Stuart Dade
Director of Group Finance Oli Foster

All contents © 2024 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

ISSN Total Film 1366-3135

We encourage you to recycle this magazine, either through your household recyclable waste collection service or at a recycling site. We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards.

ipso Regulated | Widely Recycled

21,048 (Jan-Dec 2023)
14,355 Print
6,693 Digital

abc

FUTURE
Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive Officer **Jon Steinberg**
Non-Executive Chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief Financial and Strategy Officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**
Tel: +44 (0)1225 442 244

Total Film is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (which regulates the UK's magazine and newspaper industry). We abide by the Editors' Code of Practice and are committed to upholding the highest standards of journalism.

If you think that we have not met those standards and want to make a complaint please contact totalfilm@futurenet.com. If we are unable to resolve your complaint, or if you would like more information about IPSO or the Editors' Code, contact IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or visit www.ipso.co.uk.

60 SECOND SCREENPLAY

SPOILER ALERT!

TF SAVES YOU THE COST OF A MOVIE EVERY MONTH. THIS ISSUE: GODZILLA X KONG: THE NEW EMPIRE...

WORDS MATT LOOKER

FADE IN:

EXT: HOLLOW EARTH
KING KONG brutally kills some giant cat monsters in unexpectedly gruesome ways, but then gets upset about a toothache. Meanwhile, DR REBECCA HALL is interviewed on TV.

DR REBECCA HALL
Everything is fine. Kong lives in a science-defying vortex at the centre of the Earth, and Godzilla is regularly killing big monsters and destroying cities. It's fine!

EXT: BARBADOS
Unusual activity is detected in Hollow Earth. DR REBECCA HALL's adopted daughter KAYLEE HOTTLE senses it, too. Rather anticlimactically, KONG surfaces to see a dentist.

DAN STEVENS
Hey, everyone! I'm an unconventional vet with a wacky energy and will be the only person in this film having any fun. Now let's whip out that tooth using helicopter surgery!

BRIAN TYREE HENRY
I think the readings are a distress signal. If you need a team of experts to travel to Hollow Earth, I should come, too, because I am a failing podcaster.

GODZILLA wakes up from a nap and sucks on a nuclear facility. Meanwhile, KONG returns home and discovers a cute BABY KONG. He uses him to brutally beat up other giant apes.

DR REBECCA HALL
Kong is gentle, really. Let's find the source of this distress signal so we can help him and make everyone forget about all the times he rage-murdered people.

INT: TEMPLE
KING KONG and BABY KONG kill a serpent monster while GODZILLA somehow kills a completely different serpent monster. Meanwhile, the team discovers a hidden temple.

BRIAN TYREE HENRY
Look! This temple is populated by Iwi tribespeople, the same tribe that your adopted daughter Kaylee Hottle is from. They're an extremely wise people.

The tribe worships a big moth. They communicate telepathically with KAYLEE HOTTLE, but luckily DR REBECCA HALL discovers hieroglyphics so she can explain everything aloud for the audience.

DR REBECCA HALL
Giant apes once protected humans, but then a bad ape attacked and a big Godzilla saved the day. Also, a girl will one day resurrect Mothra. It's probably nothing.

EXT: HOLLOW EARTH
KING KONG discovers more giant apes led by SKAR KING who controls the monster SHIMO with a crystal. KING KONG escapes after SHIMO freezes his hand with his ice breath.

DAN STEVENS
Oh, it's the ol' radioactive frostbite! I can fix that with a giant mecha glove. Now let's whip on that robot hand using spaceship surgery!

INT: TEMPLE
GODZILLA wakes up from another nap with a new pink mohawk. KING KONG goes to him for help but they just fight instead at the expense of some Egyptian pyramids.

DR REBECCA HALL
The Iwi tribe leaders are taking Kaylee to resurrect Mothra! I wonder how?

It's not explained. MOTHRA rises and stops the fight between KING KONG and GODZILLA so that they can all go back to Hollow Earth and fight SKAR KING and SHIMO.

BRIAN TYREE HENRY
In case you thought this wasn't chaotic enough, they are now going to fight in zero gravity! There's science behind all of this, apparently.

There are now six giant monsters float-fighting. They get sucked to Rio de Janeiro and fight some more. Eventually SHIMO's crystal is destroyed so they all gang up and kill SKAR KING.

DR REBECCA HALL
Yay! The monsters defeated the other monsters so now we can all go back to having monsters everywhere again and everything is fine.

EXT: HOLLOW EARTH
MOTHRA tidies up, KING KONG and BABY KONG return to live with the other giant apes, and GODZILLA takes another nap, but not before firing a big pink blast into the sky.

GODZILLA
HHRRAAAAAHHH!!!

EVERYONE
Why are you celebrating?! Despite getting top billing, you spent most of this film asleep!

FIN

NEXT ISSUE: THE FIRST OMEN

WARNER BROS.

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 20 JUNE

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND ENJOY GREAT SAVINGS!

See page 42 for details

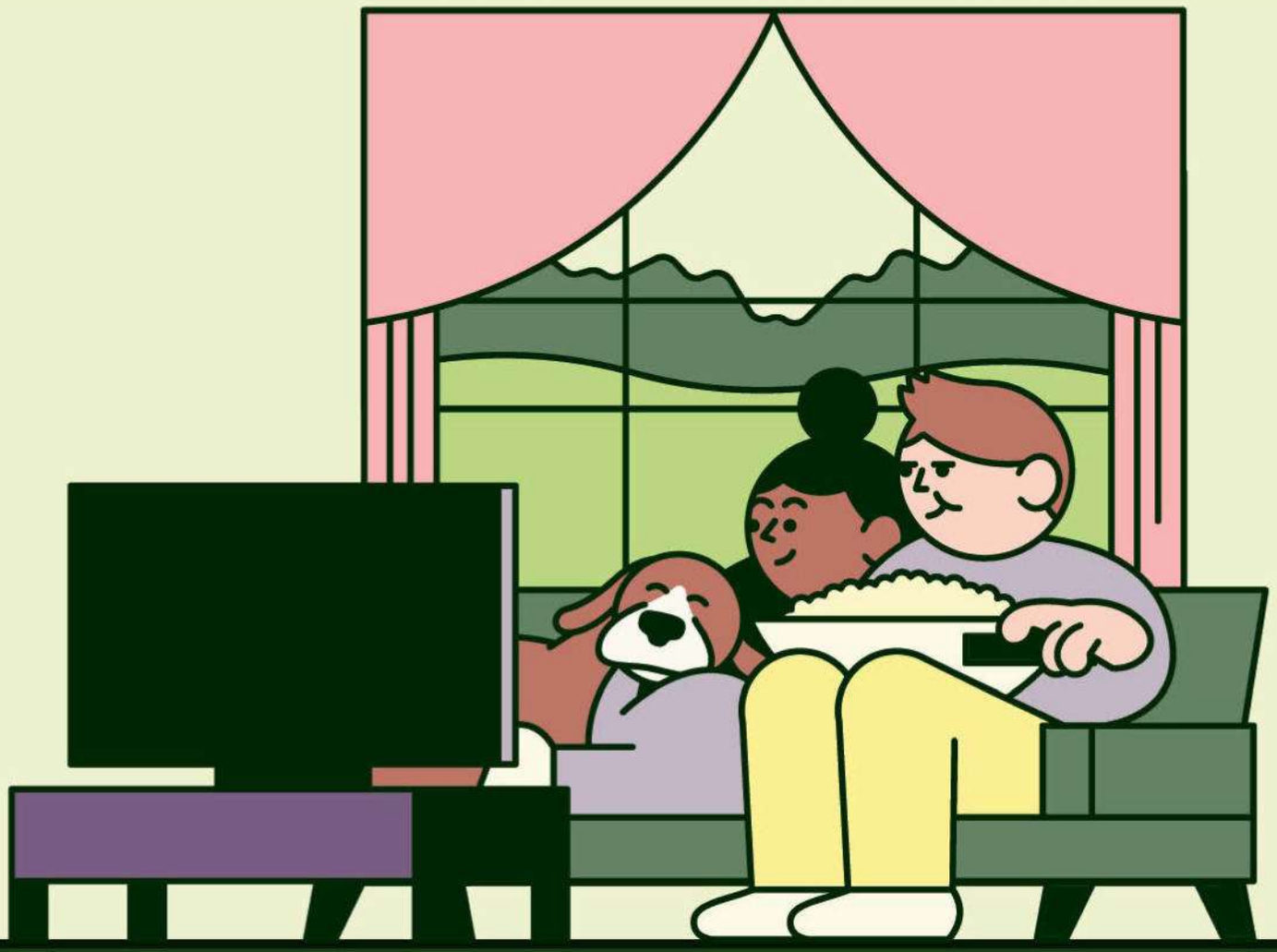
FREE GIFT

SUBSCRIBE AT TOTALFILM.COM/SUBS

Advertisement

SAVVY SAVERS, STEP THIS WAY.

Discover cover options for car, home and travel insurance, plus broadband and more.



GO. COMPARE

Get more information and compare quotes at Go.Compare.

AEG ARTISTIC PRESENTS

BLADE RUNNER

LIVE

EXPERIENCE THE GROUND-BREAKING CLASSIC, BLADE RUNNER (2007 FINAL CUT), ON A VAST HD SCREEN WHILE VANGELIS' SYNTHESIZER-LED CULT SCORE IS PERFORMED LIVE BY THE **AVEX ENSEMBLE** IN-SYNC WITH THE 1982 MULTI-ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINATED MOTION PICTURE.

UK TOUR SEPT 2024

WED	18	GLASGOW	SEC ARMADILLO
THU	19	MANCHESTER	02 APOLLO MANCHESTER
FRI	20	LONDON	EVENTIM APPOLLO
SAT	21	BIRMINGHAM	SYMPHONY HALL
MON	23	BRIGHTON	BRIGHTON CENTRE
TUE	24	BOURNEMOUTH	INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

avex classics international

FILM LIVE MUSIC

AEGPRESENTS.CO.UK

9001

9000